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THE 'HYBRID' WAR
OF RUSSIA

EXPERIENCE OF UKRAINE FOR THE BALTIC STATES

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TO THE READER

The present paper attempts to summarise the most recent and actually on-going aggression of Russia against Ukraine (as well as the aggression of Russia with respect to some other countries), and our fight to resist it. The author wishes, in the seeming chaos of rapidly changing developments, to discern the principal trends and patterns and to identify the variable and constant components in the strategy and tactics of our mutual enemy. He then wishes to analyse the reasons for our failures and defeats, as well as for our victories, and finally, to make an attempt to extrapolate the methods of our enemy, as well as our methods of resistance to the Baltic States. I feel, as do my Lithuanian colleagues, that it is specifically those countries that may become a target of Russia's aggressive policy. In fact, the principal task of the present 'Methodological guide' was to present patriots of the Baltic States with a summary scheme of the forthcoming Russian aggression, which will help them in forecasting and projecting operations of the enemy. At the same time the guide will provide them with a set of defence methods against aggression which have been already successfully tested in Ukraine. I hope that this will eventually save them from repeating our mistakes and thus free them from having to learn from their own experience – experience which is obtained at an extremely high price – the lives of thousands of patriots. To what extent the author has succeeded in attaining the aim – is for the reader to judge.

The complex nature of a 'hybrid' war where any means may be employed – ranging from setting up public organisations to 'classic' tank attacks, and where at times it is difficult to determine what contributed more to a victory or defeat – artillery or television – is reflected in the structure and content of the present text. Some sections of the paper are almost completely dedicated to the propaganda preparedness for the invasion, ideological work with the population, the role of the mass media, and the mistakes of the political leadership of the country in the face of the Russian aggression. For army officers who are used to dealing with apparent enemies and respond to most immediate threats those sections may appear somewhat boring and excessive, while they are likely to

be most beneficial for politicians, public activists and journalists. However, I still believe that army officers will 'be compensated' for the boring political sections closer to the end where I attempt, on the basis of our experience, to produce a clear, and almost 'hourly' instruction guide on the actions of patriots, and above all, the army when faced with the critical moment of transition of the enemy from political training to a direct military invasion. Nevertheless, I would suggest to the military officers, and especially those working for intelligence or security services, to put aside their predisposition towards the 'humanitarian' material of the initial sections, and attempt to understand the thinking and the algorithm of the enemy, in order to be prepared to identify the threat of an invasion in its early stage when the army is not yet involved, because when politicians refer to the army it is usually too late. The most prominent feature of a 'hybrid' war specifically is the combination of military and non-military actions, which creates, both for the army and the security services, some unconventional political challenges. One of the main lessons that Ukrainians have learned from the Russian aggression was that such aggression can only be opposed by the joint efforts of the whole of society. Furthermore, the military, the police, special services, journalists and civilians need to act in a coordinated and synchronised manner, as that is the only way to defeat the enemy. In conventional military terms this is apparently superior simply due to the material resources available to it, and the number of the army. This is exactly the factor that led to the strange combination, at first sight, in a single text of direct practical recommendations on counteracting terrorist attacks of Russian special forces, and analysis of the ideological constructions of the Russian mass media – as those are two wings of the same attacking double-headed imperial eagle. We must all be ready to repel the attack not only on the battle field, but also in the heads of our citizens; the more successful we are in fighting the ideological 'attacks on the heads', the less likely it is that we will have to fight the GRU[1] special forces.

The present text was written following a suggestion of the Military Academy of Lithuania, as an 'unrolled version' of my lecture of the same title delivered at the Academy in January 2015. Therefore I would like to extend my acknowledgement to the Vice-Rector of the Academy, Lieutenant Colonel (ret.), Doctor of Historical Sciences Gintautas Surgailis for his idea to expand the two-hour lecture into something like a 'Methodological guide on "hybrid" war'. Among other things, writing this paper put me in a position where I had to comprehend and systematise the developments, in which together with my fellow fighters I participated during the Russian–Ukrainian war of 2014–2015, to a much deeper extent, as well as those from earlier times where I had

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1   GRU – the foreign military intelligence main directorate – a special service, a body of external intelligence of the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, central body of management of the military intelligence in the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation. *Editor's comment*

the honour to stand with my Lithuanian fellow fighters on the barricades of Vilnius in 1991 to defend the independence of the Republic of Lithuania. I am hopeful that eventually the present paper will be beneficial not only for my Lithuanian brothers to whom my paper is directly addressed, but also for my homeland. I also take this opportunity to thank my other Lithuanian colleagues without whom the text would never have been written – the public activist and human rights advocate Stasys Kaušinis, who organised my lecture at the Military Academy and a number of other organisations in Lithuania, as well as the former Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania in Ukraine Prof. Petras Vaitiekūnas who provided me with the unique possibility to summarise my combat experience.

In the present paper the author has provided specific examples from the Ukrainian experience to support the generalisations and analytical conclusions. However, including a blow-by-blow account of the Russian aggression against Ukraine would have made the text less convenient for reading and would make it more difficult for the reader to understand the overall scheme and the common consistent patterns of the conflict. It is unlikely that the Baltic reader can recall the developments in Ukraine during the Revolution of Dignity (more commonly known as Maidan) in detail, and the Russian military invasion that immediately followed it. For that reason an additional reference section was added at the end of the paper, a detailed chronology of the development of the Russian–Ukrainian conflict in its 'hybrid' stage, i.e. starting with the first active actions of the Kremlin during the Maidan to the open invasion of Ukraine by multiple regular units of the Armed Forces of Russia in August 2014, and the following negotiations for a truce in Minsk. The reference section was compiled, at my request, by a former student of mine and my fellow fighter at Maidan Jaroslav Prishchepa, Master of Arts, to whom I am immensely grateful for his invaluable contribution. My grateful thanks also go to Jaroslav Prishchepa and Oksana Chopovskaja for their assistance in my search for primary sources and references, above all, to the sources of information from the media of the 'Russian world'.

THE 'HYBRID' WAR: DIFFERENCE FROM CLASSICAL SCHEMES

The Russian–Ukrainian war that broke out in 2014, gave the world a new word combination – 'hybrid' war, which immediately entered into common usage in the media.[2] Strictly speaking, among specialists in international security the term 'hybrid' war appeared slightly earlier, in 2005, and was used in the context of the Russian aggression against Georgia in 2008.[3] In fact, much of the 'arsenal' of the 'hybrid' war was developed and tested in practice by Russia during the preparation for and the invasion of Georgia. However, it was only the Russian–Ukrainian war that demonstrated that it was not a unique situation, but rather a well-conceived and elaborated scheme of political, information, ideological and military preparation for the occupation of the country – a scheme that has a universal structure and that can be, with slight modifications, extrapolated for different countries–victims of aggression. A number of journalists, politicians and specialists in international security rushed to postulate that such 'hybrid' wars will become the most common type of military conflicts of the 21st century.[4] While not being sure of such a conclusive prognosis I nevertheless (for reasons which will become evident below) expect a proliferation of the 'hybrid' war practice, at a minimum in Eastern European countries, as well as in the South Caucasus and Central Asia, and other regions potentially falling within the area of vital interests of the ruling regime of Russia. The theory and the practice of the 'hybrid conflict' today are considered to represent the foremost achievement of Russian military-political thought, and is considered (not without reason) the most effective method of subordinating a bordering state to the dictates of the

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2   http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/789b7110-e67b-11e3-9a20-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3cBsLRE6p;   https://inmoscowsshadows.wordpress.com/2014/07/06/the-gerasimov-doctrine-and-russian-non-linear-war/

3   http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2015/Also-in-2015/hybrid-modern-future-warfare-russia-ukraine/EN/, http://www.comw.org/qdr/fulltext/0712hoffman.pdf;   http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/7-KEN-NAN%20CABLE-ROJANSKY%20KOFMAN.pdf] [http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/publications/articles/hybrid-war-old-wine-in-a-new-bottle

4   Gray, Colin, 'The 21st Century Security Environment and the Future of War'. Parameters, Winter 2008-9, pp. 14–26.

Kremlin. Therefore, in all cases Russian aggression should be expected to first start using the range of forces and means of the 'hybrid' war which was tested in Ukraine in 2014–2015. At the same time the logics of the developments on a global scale (the partial success of Western policy, sanctions and the economic isolation of Russia in combination with the fall in global oil prices) force the Kremlin regime to accelerate the realisation of its aggressive plans with respect to the neighbouring countries – as the possibility of Russia winning in a full-scale conflict is rapidly decreasing in proportion to the downturn of its economy. In addition, the internal political conflicts triggered by the economic decline now require a rapid consolidation of Russian society around the image of an external enemy, and the on-going legitimisation of the Kremlin regime by demonstrating the foreign policy and military victories. Thus, the prospect of extrapolating the 'hybrid' war practice from Ukraine to the Baltic States, countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia is highly probable in the short-term. A pre-requisite for preventing the success of Russia in the presumptive conflict is a clear understanding of the essence and the character of a 'hybrid' war as a specific type of military–political conflict, and an ability to project the most likely actions of Russia in the first stages of the 'hybrid' war, when the countries – targets of the Russian aggression – have not yet lost their chance to localise the conflict and win in it with 'little blood'.

Despite its frequent use in the media, no comprehensive definition of a 'hybrid' war has yet been produced, nor has there been any explanation of how it is different to other types of warfare. In the opinion of the author, in its most general form a 'hybrid' war may be defined as aggression of one state against another, externally disguised under an internal political conflict in the state which is the victim of aggression. This kind of aggression should not be confused with the practice of the direct intervention of the Soviet bloc and NATO in the civil wars in third world countries during the Cold War, whether directly (Angola, Vietnam, Ethiopia, etc.) or indirectly Mozambique, South Rhodesia, etc.). The civil conflicts of the Cold War period were provoked by internal reasons, such conflicts were developing independently in each of the countries, and could be only slightly modified by external intervention. In the case of the modern 'hybrid' war of Russia there does not necessarily have to be an internal conflict – such conflict is imitated by Russian media irrespective of the actual state of affairs. In this case we are observing an unprovoked direct foreign invasion, just externally camouflaged as a 'civil' war in the country, the victim of aggression.5

The most distinguishing feature of a 'hybrid' war is the combination of two seemingly mutually exclusive factors: the conducting of direct war by the Russian Federation (hereinafter – RF) (from the passing of all political and even operative top-level decisions by the Kremlin management to the direct

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5   Попов И. Матрица войн современной эпохи, http://nvo.ng.ru/concepts/2013-03-22/7_matrix.html

involvement of the regular military forces of the RF in the hostilities), and the declared refusal by Russia to recognise its involvement in the conflict.

As we will learn later, understanding this 'paradoxical' combination is critical and indispensable for the purpose of passing political and military decisions by the country–victim of aggression and the international community. The deeply erroneous understanding of the nature of war as imposed by the RF leads to a perception that political forces or persons, which in reality do not take any independent decisions, have no influence upon the decisions taken by the Kremlin, and are hardly ever informed by the political leadership of the RF of its plans or decisions, actually act as 'independent parties of the conflict'. Any attempts to conduct negotiations with such political forces or persons (the negotiations that Russia eagerly promotes the country-victim of aggression and the international community to engage in) support and sustain the illusion of an 'internal civil conflict' in the country subject to aggression and this in fact is convenient only for the Kremlin, and leads to the loss of extremely valuable time (specifically in the early stages of the conflict) for discussions that are doomed, a priori, to failure.

For the purpose of forecasting the course of a 'hybrid conflict' it should be borne in mind at all times that the logics of its development do not follow the logics of the development of internal political conflicts. The logics of development of civil conflicts have been extensively studied by modern political sciences, a fixed set of military and (preferably) political solutions has been developed for the purpose of localising and gradually terminating such conflicts. Such a set of actions is based on the achievement of a prudent compromise between the principal conflicting parties, and a subsequent localisation of the 'irreconcilable' radical forces. The paradoxical nature of 'hybrid' warfare as described earlier and which is camouflaged as a civil conflict triggers a natural temptation to forecast the development of the conflict according to classical schemes and to apply the mechanisms of internal political regulation as described earlier for the achievement of peace. This approach is doomed to failure as a 'hybrid' war does not in fact subordinate to the logics of the development of an internal conflict. From a strategic and operational viewpoint, a 'hybrid' war is essentially a fully planned military operation of one state against another, and develops in full compliance with the logics of a 'classic', well-planned military invasion controlled from a single headquarters. It is specifically this perception of 'hybrid' warfare that permits projecting the course of its development. It is necessary to discern – simply through the camouflaging signs of a 'civil' conflict – a consolidated operational plan developed and implemented by a military-political leadership of a foreign state. The prognosis of the course of events must be based on an evaluation of the military and economic resources, foreign policy capabilities, and take into account the internal political situation of the state-aggressor, rather than based on the internal circumstances of the state-victim of aggression. The

latter only create a background, which is more or less conducive to an external invasion, but is in no way a primary cause for the conflict.[6]

Individual sections of the 'hybrid' war instrument tool were developed by ideologists, propagandists and special services and the military of Russia well before 2014. Whereas the participation of Russia in the Armenian–Azerbaijan war (1992-94) or the civil war in Tajikistan (1992-97) could be fully described as a 'scheme of external involvement in an independently triggered conflict', then the armed conflicts in Transdniestria (1992), Abkhazia (1992–1993) and South Ossetia (1991-1992) were to a large extent instigated from the outside by the then leadership of the Kremlin. Those conflicts, for the first time ever, set the scene for developing a methodology for the international legitimisation of Russian military aggression, under which the invasion forces initially act unofficially, without any distinctive signs and disguised as local paramilitary formations. Following the military success they legitimise themselves at international negotiations as 'a Russian peacekeeping contingent'.

Among other examples of the 'early experience of a hybrid war' is the initial stage of the first Russian–Chechen war (November–December 1994), when the territory of an internationally not yet recognised but de facto independent Republic of Ichkeria was invaded by regular forces of the Russian army, camouflaged as 'Chechen field commanders who rebelled against President Dudaev'. Then the military failure of the operation in combination with the then operational independent media in the RF forced the Kremlin to publicly acknowledge the participation of its military forces in warfare and to legitimise them in the future as 'restorers of constitutional order'.[7] It is important to note that despite the apparently illegitimate nature of the actions of the army of the RF (even by Russian laws) in the early 'hybrid' stage of this Russian–Chechen war, subsequently all such actions were post hoc justified according to the principle of 'political expediency', which created a precedent for lawlessness in all subsequent conflicts involving the RF.

The second Russian–Chechen war in 1999–2001 also had prominent features of a 'hybrid conflict'; in seeking to legitimise its openly unlawful acts (the military aggression after the signature of the Khasavyurt Accord in 1996, overthrowing the Government of Ichkeria elected in the course of internationally recognised elections under the control of the OSCE[8] in 1997) the Kremlin successfully used a 'hybrid' war instrument that we will meet on numerous occasions in relation to studying the Russian–Ukrainian war: imitation of the inability of the legitimate government of the country-victim of aggression to control the

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6 Хоффман Фрэнк. Гибридные угрозы, http://navoine.info/hybrid-dange.html
7 http://www.polit.ru/article/2004/11/29/chech/
8 OSCE –Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Editor's comment

territory of its country, and the actions of its armed forces. This method will be further considered in detail, as according to the modern methodology of the 'hybrid' war of the Kremlin, the method is one of the principal elements.

The second element of the 'hybrid' war toolbox, ranging from creating a propaganda image of the enemy to identifying weaknesses in the system of international collective security, and neutralisation of the interference of Western states, was successfully exploited by Russia in the aggression against Georgia in 2008, in the course of the so-called 'peace enforcement '(one more new term introduced by the RF, however, less widespread than the term 'hybrid' war).

Thus in 2014, the basic toolbox of 'hybrid' war had been essentially fully developed, and its individual elements were tested in a number of local conflicts. And it was specifically in the war against Ukraine launched by the RF in spring 2014, after the Kremlin failed to limit itself to 'classic' interference from the outside in the internal civil conflict. There was minimum direct interference by the RF to help retain the regime of the pro-Russian president Victor Yanukovych. He was **subsequently3** overthrown in the course of the national democratic Revolution of Dignity in November 2013–February 2014. It was against this background that the full-scale arsenal of the 'hybrid' war was used by Russia in a systemic way and to the full extent, while the 'hybrid' war itself acquired the form of a completed Russian military-political project, which is further used as a template in any other country selected as a target for aggression. In Russia, the plan for military intervention against Ukraine was named 'project "Russian spring – 2014"'. The present paper is an attempt to analyse the essence and the form of the project, and to develop adequate and effective countermeasures. Should the project 'Russian spring in the Baltic' remain unrealised as a result of the timely intervention by the armies, law enforcement services and civil society of the Baltic States against the Kremlin, – this will be the best practical application of the present paper and the highest award that the author could dream of.

OBJECTIVES AND TASKS
OF RUSSIA IN THE 'HYBRID' WAR

In the course of 'hybrid' warfare in post-Soviet territory the leadership of the RF sets a number of different objectives, which when considered as a whole represent a project for building a so-called 'Russian world'. It is beyond our mostly practical research to analyse the ideological foundation of the 'Russian world' concept as opposed to the entire Western civilisation. The 'Russian World' claims quite unreasonably to represent not just one country, albeit large in size, but rather to be an 'alternative civilisation project' (while at the same time suffering from a deep-rooted lack of self-sufficiency and jealousy towards

the most hated West). For the purpose of fulfilling our practical tasks we shall merely define the specific external political objectives pursued by the Kremlin, the attainment whereof would mean the success of the 'Russian world' as a global political project.

The 'Russian world' project is essentially a Matryoshka doll, or a bulb, with the Kremlin as its core surrounded with concentric circles representing the different levels of control exerted by the Russian military-political leadership.

The first circle of the 'Russian world Matryoshka' is represented by the RF itself. In the last 16 years under the rule of Vladimir Putin this control has become increasingly totalitarian and authoritarian in nature. With respect to the territory of the RF, the 'Russian world' anticipates maintaining, for an unspecified period of time (and forever in an ideal case), direct 'manual' rule by the Kremlin (the so-called 'vertical power'). This direct manual rule envisages the complete liquidation of civil society institutions, independent media, the prevailing formal imitation of election procedures under the actually authoritarian nature of governance and absence of any alternatives to the governing powers, alongside a constantly operational apparatus of state ideological propaganda (replacing independent media). It also retains a resource-oriented economy completely dependant on State business. This objective has actually been completely achieved by the Kremlin.

The next circle of the 'Russian world' is the independent states, the former Republics of the Soviet Union. With respect to these the project envisages a gradual enforcement of control by the Kremlin similar to what has already been achieved in the territory of the RF. While formally retaining the status of 'independent states' the 'Russian world' project envisages the creation of puppet regimes, which are fully controlled by the Kremlin, and a gradually loss by these states of all attributes of sovereignty, except their flag, the coat-of-arms and the national anthem.

It should be fully understood that the ultimate goal of the RF with respect to the post-Soviet states is not simply the establishment of pro-Russian puppet regimes compliant with the realisation of the foreign policy pursued by the Kremlin, while independently controlling the situation inside their countries. Such regimes are perceived only as transition stages, necessary for enforcing full-scale control of the RF over the post-Soviet states. The 'Russian world' concept does not rely on its 'allies'; the objective is the establishment of complete direct control of the RF over the post-Soviet countries.

The plan for the integration of a previously independent country into the 'Russian world' envisages that the establishment of a pro-Russian puppet regime will be followed by a number of internal political transformation and

actions in the area of foreign policy. This would eventually make it impossible for the country to withdraw from the orbit of influence of the 'Russian world' irrespective of the wish of the local authorities. Eventually this means that the pro-Russian puppet regime must gradually transfer virtually all its functions directly to the Kremlin, or Russian corporations and institutions controlled by the Kremlin, while retaining a decorative function only, similar to that of the 'authorities' of autonomous formations within the RF.

In the area of internal policy, the RF requires the pro-Russian regime to phase out all its democratic institutions, enforce control over the media, liquidate anti-Russian opposition, and demonstrate complete control over the situation in the country to the greatest extent possible. In addition, while publicly supporting the pro-Russian regime the RF unofficially furthers the international isolation as 'dictatorial' and 'undemocratic', which puts the regime in a position where the only choice the country has is to orientate itself towards the Kremlin. The examples of Belarus and Armenia are clear evidence of the success of such a policy.[9]

As part of its foreign policy the puppet regime will be required to sign a range of military–political and commercial–economic agreements with the RF, which de facto will mean integration of the country into the RF. Creation of a common customs area (an alternative to the EU single market), a single defence system (a bloc alternative to NATO), deployment of Russian military forces in the country and, in the long term, the introduction of a single currency. According to the 'Russian world' plan, this level of integration is envisaged for all post-Soviet states, without exception.

It would be a mistake to consider that having achieved this level of integration the RF anticipates retaining the primary role of the pro-Russian puppet regime. On the contrary, for the purpose of maintaining the control of the RF over the integrated country the plan further envisages a gradual transfer of control over individual areas of life of the integrated country from the local puppet regime directly to Russia. The principal novelty of the 'Russian world' plan in its current form, as compared to a number of previous projects designed to establish imperial control of the RF over other countries, is the attention devoted not only to efforts to establish 'vertical' control, but also 'horizontal' control, under which all areas of life of the 'satellite' country will be removed from the control of the puppet regime and directly integrated into the respective area of Russia.[10] In this sense the 'Russian world' project is most similar not to the relatively recent political projects of establishing pro-Western or pro-Soviet regimes in post-colonial countries of the 'third world', but rather to the further back Stalinist practice of 'sovietisation'.

9   http://newcaucasus.com/index.php?newsid=7200
10   http://www.1tv.ru/news/polit/215922

First of all, where the media are controlled by the state, the alleged 'freedom' of the media space is imitated by direct broadcasting of Russian media (with the opposition and Western media being banned from the media space), in addition to Russian media purchasing holding companies of media-assets in a satellite country. The bank capital and the large-scale industry of the country is also managed in an integrated and direct way from the RF. Projects under the guise of 'development of ethnic minorities' are implemented in the area of education involving mass imposition of the Russian language, first of all as the 'language of success', the 'language of the modern world', as opposed to the local 'provincial', 'backward' and 'household' languages. Under the pretext of the 'European practice of protection of languages and culture of minorities' official bilingualism is imposed in the state-satellite, where the Russian language formally becomes the second state language. The dominance of Russia in the media area rapidly leads to the local language being edged out from most areas, and being replaced by Russian (the Republic of Belarus, or the Autonomous Republic of Crimea in Ukraine, and the unrecognised Transdniestrian Moldovan Republic are examples of the success of such a language policy).

Opposition that is even more dependent on Moscow is built up in the country as a leverage for the local satellite government. Such an opposition can oppose the existing regime at any time should the latter not be sufficiently 'loyal' to Moscow, while the opposition simultaneously performs two functions – giving the appearance of maintaining democracy and providing additional pressure on behalf the Kremlin on the local puppets. At the same time the anti-Russian opposition is being eliminated from the policy of the country up to physical elimination to the greatest extent possible.

Finally, another important aspect of 'horizontal' control is the establishment of direct control over the army and the special services of the satellite state through the local puppet regime. Army and special services officers are recruited by Russia as informers and agents and of FSB[11] and GRU, primarily by involving them in corruption schemes subsequently subject to blackmail by special services of the RF. The RF also assists them in their rise up the career ladder up to a point where such agents are appointed to most or all key positions in the army or special services of the satellite countries. The method in itself is not new, it has been well tested throughout the twentieth century and well before. However, the scope of its use in building the 'Russian world' by far exceeds any of its previous applications: as the goal in this case is not only to build a conventional agency network in foreign armies or special services, but rather to completely replace the leadership positions in the army and special services by people directly dependent on the special services of the RF, de facto,

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11   FSB – Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation – a Russian special service ФСБ – a Russian special service continuing the traditions of repression bodies of the Soviet Union (KGB and others). *Editor's comment*

a complete shift of control over the army and special services from the pro-Russian puppet government directly to the RF. Complementing this scheme is the direct delegation of Russian officers to the governing bodies of the special services of the satellite country – initially as advisers, who further change their citizenship or officially receive high positions in the actually occupied countries. The efficiency of such a policy was clearly demonstrated in Ukraine, where in the last years of the pro-Russian regime of Yanukovytch, control over the national Security Service was in fact transferred directly to the FSB of the RF,[12] and the agency of the GRU within the Ukrainian maritime forces in the Crimea appeared sufficient (and held key, high-level positions) to paralyse any resistance of the Ukrainian navy forces, in the event of a military invasion, and to provide the Russian army with a sufficient time margin to gain control over all strategic locations of the peninsula without any battle.

Should the above measures be enforced in their entirety a post-Soviet state will take the place envisaged for it in the 'Russian world', which except for its formal status as an 'independent' country in fact will be no different from the status of an 'autonomy' within the RF. It is important to understand that this role is envisaged for all post-Soviet countries irrespective of their current status, which within the 'Russian world' project is understood as 'temporary' and 'accidental' and which eventually should be 'corrected'.

It is none the less important to understand that the full-scale set of measures aimed at 'forcing to become part of the "Russian world"', as described above, may be chronologically different subject to the circumstances prevailing in each specific country. The establishment of the local puppet regime may be preceded by a gradual taking over of control of media, banks and industry, followed by investment in different political and cultural-educational projects, formally not necessarily related to the RF. Such a 'light invasion' may be realised well before the establishment of the puppet regime, while preparing the grounds for such a regime through horizontal control of the RF over individual areas of the policy and economy of the country-victim of aggression.

It should also be noted that the invasion might be realised at different times in individual parts of the country-victim to the aggression. This was the scenario in the development of the RF aggression against Moldova (successful project 'Transdniestria', and a less successful project 'Gagauzia'), Georgia (successful projects 'Abkhazia' and 'South Ossetia', a failure in 'Adjara') and Ukraine (a successful project 'Crimea', a less successful project 'Novorossiya,' partly successful projects 'Donetsk People's Republic' and 'Lugansk People's Republic'). It should also be clearly understood that exclusion of individual territories was not the final goal of the RF in any of the cases; rather it was

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12   http://nbnews.com.ua/news/73436/

a means towards achieving the final objective – complete control over the countries-victims of the aggression. In addition, the different degrees of integration of separatist territories of the RF (ranging from full official integration of the Crimea, incorporation into the RF through the recognition of the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, to the position of the Transdniestria, and the Donetsk People's Republic (hereinafter – DPR) and the Lugansk People's Republic (hereinafter – LPR), although officially recognised by Russia as territories of Moldova and Ukraine are in fact controlled by military forces of the RF) are purely a matter of technical detail related to the different stages of implementation of the ultimate goal – the complete integration of the entire post-Soviet area into the RF.

The next circle in the 'Matryoshka of the Russian world' is represented by a number of countries in Central and Eastern Europe – mainly former members of the Warsaw Pact (countries of the Visegrad Group and the Balkan region, including Greece), and a number of states of the 'third world' (primarily Syria, and a number of other Arab countries, also Brazil, India, Iran, Israel, Turkey). With respect to these countries complete total control by Moscow is recognised as impossible; however, the aim of the project with them is to establish relations under which the countries would act as allies of Russia in all foreign policy matters. Russia would in addition have at a minimum, a 'veto' right regarding all serious foreign policy issues. As a 'maximum programme' the project envisages support to the political regime in such countries; this means they are consistently friendly to the RF and hostile to the USA. The project envisages supporting such countries with preferential terms for large-scale corporate business, a regime with preferential treatment for citizens of the RF (up to ignoring local laws and regulations), and maximum dependence of the local political sources on the financial 'influences' of Moscow, including the involvement of local political authorities in corruption schemes whose participants eventually end up as hostages and 'agents of influence' of the special services of the RF. The preferred arrangement with respect to 'third world' countries is the establishment of a dictatorship closely related to Moscow. With respect to European countries and Israel such an arrangement is recognised as unrealistic, therefore, the focus is on parallel 'feeding' and involving both the local ruling elite and the local opposition leaders in corruption schemes, in order to ensure the stability of the pro-Moscow course and retain Russian influence even with the regular changes of governments characteristic of democratic states. Part of the plan is to establish unofficial 'soft' control over the local media space, ensuring that the media mainly broadcast Russian propaganda messages. However, this is done in their own name thus retaining the apparent 'independence'.

The next layer of the Russian Matryoshka contains the continental states of Western Europe. Those range from Germany and Austria to Spain, Portugal and

Scandinavia, and are assigned the role of 'neutral buffer' between Russia and the Anglo-Saxon countries (in the 'Russian world' project these are viewed as eternal enemies, and the only worthy rivals of the Russian Empire), and that of 'useful idiots' playing the role of a pro-Russian international lobby in the confrontation between Russia and the USA in the international arena. With respect to these countries the project envisages an 'extra soft' control, enforced essentially through three main mechanisms: direct concealed control over the political elite (both the ruling, and the opposition) by involving them in corruption schemes (this is what was called the 'Schreoderisation effect' by the German media after the former Chancellor of Germany Gerhard Schröder was 'bought' by the Russian Gazprom concern).[13] Second, control of messages in the local media through financial agreements with their owners, and third through systemic 'feeding' of local journalists and intellectuals, and awarding preferential terms to local large-scale corporations in economic projects with Russia in exchange for the possibility to exploit the lobbying capacities of such corporations for the benefit of Russia in the respective countries. The 'minimum programme' for the countries of this 'circle' envisages a possibility for the pro-Russian lobby to veto any political decisions that are not advantageous to Russia in those countries at any time, while the 'maximum programme' seeks to build up stable pro-Russian public opinion, and the involvement of all key leaders in the political and economic life in joint activities with Russia (preferably, corrupted), which will ensure preferences for Russia in Western European countries and support for initiatives of the Kremlin, thus confronting the Anglo-Saxon countries on the part of the continental European states.

A prerequisite for full-scale realisation of the project as described above is the disassembling of the NATO bloc and the European Union in their current form. Currently the RF is devoting considerable efforts and investing significant resources to supporting the so-called euro-sceptics in the political circles of the European Union, as well as to promoting anti-American, and, accordingly, anti-NATO movements in European countries. The 'Russian world' concept in its completed form envisages significant weakening of the West and dividing it into three conflicting and warring parts: the USA and the Anglo-Saxon world (deprived according to the Kremlin plan of union relations with continental Europe), the continental countries of 'old Europe' (according to the plan of the Kremlin, actively fighting for influence against the Anglo-Saxon world, and allied with Russia), and Central and Eastern Europe countries (according to the Kremlin's plan completely withdrawn from foreign policy unions with the USA and Western Europe, competing with the countries of 'old Europe', and fully transitioning under the 'soft' control by Russia). A geopolitical setup such

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13   [http://www.svoboda.org/content/transcript/2279758.html] [http://old.khodorkovsky.ru/media/Hansard_Official_Report_-_Wednesday_14th_October_-_ru.pdf] [http://www.lithuaniatribune.com/1122/edward-lucas-lithuanias-foreign-policy-is-getting-schroderised-20101122/]

as this must, according to the Kremlin's plan, secure Russia a role as a 'global player', competing on equal grounds with and sharing 'spheres of influence' with the USA.[14]

In general, the geopolitical project of the 'Russian world' in its current appearance is deeply archaic, which often makes it for Western countries difficult to understand. In order to understand the project there is no need to refer to any contemporary political science concepts elaborated in developed Western countries and societies in the globalisation era; on the contrary – what needs to be done is simply recall the 'classics' of geopolitical thought – experienced a long time ago, critically perceived by Europeans and rejected as failed. The 'Russian world' project has a number of attributes inherited directly from the epoch of colonial conquests of the nineteenth century i.e. the understanding of 'grand geopolitics' as a competition between several superpowers for direct colonial control over all smaller states ('the great game'), and the concept of the 'division of the world' (perceived as an entirety of passive and inefficient 'pseudo-powers') among several active 'global players'. The very projected global space controlled by Moscow within the limits of the self-defined 'natural sphere of influence' is built following the model of the former USSR and its areas of influence (the Warsaw Pact and CMEA[15]) with an amendment towards a pseudo-market economy (based on state-run monopolies and large-scale corporations merged with the state but still under private ownership, primarily of oligarchs. The archaic nature of the 'Russian world' project is so profound that in a number of aspects it succumbs to the 'New Europe' project in the form designed by German Nazis in 1943–1944, and is close to Hitler's geopolitical concepts of 'German control over Europe' and 'world domination' in 1939–1940.[16]

In the twenty-first century a plan of this nature might not seem feasible in practice and completely unrealistic. In my opinion, from the long-term perspective such a plan is actually not feasible, as it is contradictory to the principal trends of the development of the modern globalised world in a number of aspects. Furthermore, today's Russia does not have sufficient resources to implement it. However, if we thoroughly analyse the trends in the media sphere and the public policy of Western and Central-Eastern Europe over the past decade, we can see that a number of the provisions of the Kremlin's plan have been successfully implemented. Thus, throughout Europe openly pro-Russian political parties directly funded by the Kremlin have already left the marginal areas of politics and became part of the 'great politics'; in individual

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14 Дугин А.Г. Война континентов. Современный мир в геополитической системе координат. - Изд. «Академический проект», 2014.

15 CMEA – Council of Mutual Economic Assistance, an international economic organisation operational in 1949–1991, under the leadership of the USSR comprised a number of countries, its satellites in Eastern Europe, also Cuba and Vietnam. *Editor's comment*

16 Дугин А.Г. Геополитика России. Изд. „Академический проект", 2012.

countries (Czech Republic, Greece, Israel, Hungary and Turkey) and come into power.[17] Meanwhile, in some other states (France, Germany, Italy and Poland) they represent, as a minimum, an influential opposition fighting for power and are able to veto any decision of the government.[18] In both the European media space and the circles of European 'intellectuals', Kremlin propaganda messages are freely communicated, and without meeting any criticism (thus, in the Italian and Spanish language media the course of the Russian–Ukrainian war is presented exclusively by Russian broadcasting sources), the anti-American, anti-NATO and 'euro-sceptical' rhetoric is only gaining pace. The impossibility of realising the 'Russian world' plan to its full extent and for a long-term period does not mean that in the immediate future there will not be any serious attempts to realise the individual elements of the plan in different European countries, in particular, those geographically close to the RF, or those temporarily weakened by internal difficulties and crises. On the contrary, the next few years will be marked by intensified efforts and attempts to realise the 'Russian world' project, as the Kremlin itself is forced to follow the path due to the internal political problems in Russia itself.

The Baltic States should indeed see their place within the 'Russian world' project, and not deceive themselves about their security just because of their EU and NATO membership. The 'Russian world' project treats the Baltic States belonging to the West in three different ways: a short-term problem, a historic 'accident', and an attempt by the West to 'penetrate a traditionally Russian area of influence', and 'tear off what belongs to Russia'. This vision eventually leads to the conclusion that the return of the Baltics from Western influence to the influence of the 'Russian world' is a priority in terms of time and a particularly important psychological task within this geopolitical project. In addition, the context for the Baltic States is not the same as the context planned for Czech Republic, Hungary and other former satellites of the USSR (establishment of 'soft' control through puppet regimes, the media and 'bribery' of the elite). The Baltic States are seen as equal to other former republics of the USSR, i.e. as countries for which the project envisages the introduction of full-scale direct control by the RF.

The objectives and the tasks of Russia in the short-term and medium-term period could be summarised as follows:

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17   http://carnegie.ru/publications/?fa=59106] [http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-02-17/hungary-s-orban-seals-russia-gas-deal-as-putin-nexus-pays-off; http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21601004-why-europes-populists-and-radicals-admire-vladimir-putin-russias-friends-black] [http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/world-news/hungary-s-far-right-backed-by-rolling-moscow-roubles-1.1034539

18   http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/40m-of-russian-cash-will-allow-marine-le-pens-front-national-to-take-advantage-of-rivals-woes-in-upcoming-regional-and-presidential-elections-9888509.html;   http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/11515835/Russia-bought-Marine-Le-Pens-support-over-Crimea.html]   [http://www.france24.com/en/20141123-france-far-right-turns-russian-lender-national-front-marine-le-pen

▶ Break up of NATO from the inside by conflicting the interests of the USA, Great Britain and continental Europe, up to a dissolution of the Alliance.

▶ Disassociation of the European Union by supporting 'euro-sceptics' and fuelling the confrontation between Great Britain, 'old Europe', and the new Member States from Central-Eastern Europe, up to a dissolution of the EU and restructuring it into a fairly inefficient consultancy body like the Council of Europe and OSCE.

▶ Building up the 'Russian world' consisting essentially of three consistent 'spheres of influence': zones under complete and direct control of the RF incorporating, without exception, all post-Soviet countries, zones of 'soft' control from countries of Central Europe and the 'third world', and the zone of 'pro-Russian useful idiots' made up of countries of continental Western Europe. The place of the Baltic States within the scheme is seen as being within the zone of total RF control. [19]

Russian military aggression against Ukraine in 2014–2015 marked the outset of the new phase of the 'Russian world' project, and specifically the transition of the RF to the phase of imposing direct military-political control over post-Soviet states.

SUCCESSION OF THE MAIN PHASES OF THE HYBRID WAR

As mentioned in Section I, by 2014, the arsenal of measures and methods of a 'hybrid' war had been essentially developed by the Kremlin's political analysts and Russian military authorities. Most such measures and methods were individually preliminarily approved in the course of numerous local conflicts in the post-Soviet area. This facilitated the RF, even before the war against Ukraine, to compile all of the measures into a single invasion plan, known under the project name 'Russian spring'. As the 'Russian spring' was simultaneously implemented in different regions of Ukraine, we were privileged to witness a rare opportunity, in the course of a single military conflict, carry out a comparative analysis of several versions of the early stages of the 'hybrid' war, and generalise the results obtained by capturing the master plan of the 'hybrid' war, as viewed by the current leadership of the RF, and the way in which the plan will be exploited with respect to other countries – the future victims of Russian aggression with minor local variations (similar to the local variations in the course of the operations of the 'Russian spring in Ukraine – 2014', with

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19   Дугин А.Г. Евразийский реванш России. - Изд. „Алгоритм", 2014 г.

individual elements earlier elaborated in the course of the aggression of the RF against Moldova and Georgia).

In the most general sense, the Russian plan for conquering the bordering countries includes the following consistent phases:

'Zero' or 'latent' phase – the phase of psychological and propaganda war. Within this phase the objectives of the RF are as follows:

▶ the psychological preparation of Russian society regarding the 'necessity' for armed interference of the RF in the country selected as a target of aggression;

▶ the psychological preparation of society in the country-victim of aggression, which is expected to weaken any resistance to the invasion;

▶ preparation of pro-Russian groups of influence in the country-victim of aggression, which will be directly activated during the subsequent phases of the invasion;

▶ preparation of public opinion and the political position in the Western states which are expected to legitimise the aggressive actions of the RF against the invaded country in the eyes of the world community, and neutralise the international mechanisms of collective security.

This 'zero' stage does not have any specific time-frame, and may be implemented for an unlimited period of time, pending the emergence of a situation more favourable for the transition to the next phase of the 'hybrid' war. As distinct from the subsequent phases of the conflict, this phase does not imply a necessary concentration of substantial material and human resources, therefore it may be implemented by the RF simultaneously against several or even multiple states – potential victims of aggression, with a view to securing a possibility to impose subsequent blows against any of them where the circumstances become conducive to a shifting to the next phase of the conflict (or where such actions are caused by the internal political or foreign political circumstances in the RF itself).

The phase of direct invasion may be characterised as the 'destabilisation phase, and at the same time as the **'war of tele pictures'.**

At this stage the RF invokes the most radical elements of influence in the country-victim of aggression, using a limited number of professionals from special services and the army of the RF to destabilise the situation, create an atmosphere of chaos and anarchy and imitate a 'civil conflict' in the country-

victim of aggression. At the same time all the possibilities of the propaganda apparatus of the RF are activated in order to create a specific 'picture' in Russian and Western media, which is supposed to legitimise the subsequent actions of the RF in the eyes of Russian and Western society. A more detailed analysis of this phase will be presented further, but the main objectives of the RF in this period are as follows:

▶ imitating a 'civil conflict' in the country-victim of aggression;

▶ building up a negative image of the potential opponents to the Russian invasion;

▶ constructing an illusion of 'weakness' of the legitimate government of the country and 'absence of control' on the part of the legitimate authorities of the country over the territory (whole or part of it), and over different 'armed units' (actual and alleged);

▶ forming the 'image of a victim of violence' among supporters of Russia in the country-victim of aggression, imitation of 'repressions of the civilian population' by the country's authorities, or 'radical elements uncontrolled by the authorities'.

A logical continuation of the phase described above is the next phase:

'imitation of civil resistance'. Following the imitation of 'cruel repressions' the pro-Russian groups of influence, now under the immediate orders of officers of the FSB and GRU, and with direct involvement of special forces of the Russian army, imitate the formation of a 'civil defence movement', whose mission is purportedly to 'protect the peaceful civil population subject to repressions'.

The phase of formal declaration of resistance is immediately followed by:

a **phase of escalation of violence and provocations – 'the first blood phase'.** The immediate objective of the RF in this phase of the conflict is to provoke the authorities of the country into bloodshed which will immediately be presented with a decidedly one-sided bias by the Russian media, will compromise the legitimate authorities of the country in the eyes of the entire global community, and will legitimise the transition of the RF to the next stage of active operations. An additional objective at this stage is achievement of a 'point of no-return' for the pro-Russian group inside the country-victim of the invasion, meaning, the achievement of such a level of mutual hatred, and number of casualties which will make any attainment of direct agreement between the local pro-Russian forces involved in the operations and the legitimate authorities of the country-victims to aggression impossible without the 'intermediation' and 'peacekeeping efforts' of Russia.

As illustrated below, should the authorities of the country-victim of the aggression avoid the designed provocations, and not permit themselves to be blamed for the 'repressions', this does not stop the course of operations as described earlier, but rather forces the RF to slightly reconfigure its actions – 'repressions' continue to be imitated, they are not attributed to their legitimate authorities, but rather to actual or alleged 'radical groups', while the authorities are accused of 'reluctance' or 'inability' to protect the civil population from the repressions of such 'radical forces'. In either scenario the process proceeds to the next phase of the 'hybrid' war.

The next phase may be characterised as the:

'Phase of imitation of subjectivity'. At this stage the objective of the RF is to imitate the establishment of 'self-governance' or an 'alternative government' from among the pro-Russian groups of influence who have actively participated in the previous phases of the conflict, i.e. imitate a transition from 'spontaneously emerged self-defence groups' to 'legitimate representatives of the will of the local population'. The key point in this phase is the imitation of control of pro-Russian groups over specific territories, absence on such territories of any control by the national government, and as a result – imitation of 'equality of the parties' in the conflict of the groups with the national government (the 'maximum' version – imitation of the shift of control over the entire territory of the country, or over key localities to such 'bodies of self-governance'). This stage of the conflict may, as necessary, involve larger numbers of regular military forces of the RF, formally camouflaged as 'paramilitary formations' subordinate to such 'bodies of local self-governance'.

A logical completion of the 'imitation of subjectivity' phase as described earlier is the next phase, which may be described as the 'phase of legitimisation of the invasion, or the phase of referenda'. At this stage the principal objective of the RF is the international legitimisation of the occupation of the entire country or part of it through an imitation of a 'manifestation of the people's will' (referenda, elections, etc.). Organisation of such events then enables the RF to further demand from the national government (provided it has not been overthrown in the course of the preceding phase of the conflict and managed to retain control over part of the country's territory), and the international community to recognise the occupation 'authorities' as equal to the national government in negotiation proceedings, and legitimise a further and even larger-scale military invasion of the RF by 'applying for military assistance with a view to defending the peaceful civil population' from those bodies of local governance elected on a nation-wide basis'.

Whereas the previous phases of the conflict did not end with a complete overthrow of the national government, or replacement of it by a 'puppet' regime,

the next phase of the conflict represents **a full-scale military invasion of the armed forces of the RF**, imitating 'a war between the national government and bodies of self-governance on the soil not controlled by the latter'. In addition, despite the full-scale nature of the conflict, and the mass participation in it of regular armed forces of the RF, formally they all act under the guise of 'paramilitary formations' subordinate to the 'local self-governance' of the territories occupied by the RF.

For the RF, the preferred ending to this stage of the conflict is a military defeat of the national government, and the accession to power of the pro-Russian puppet regime over the whole country. A 'minimum' target then is seen as achieving a 'stalemate' situation, when the national government cannot be overthrown, but it is still losing control over part of the country's territory. The national government is subsequently forced to legitimise the occupation of part of the country by recognising the 'autonomy' of the puppet 'self-governance bodies' located in those parts of the country, and therefore legitimising their armed units. It is also forced to legitimise the presence of the Russian military forces in the country as a 'peacekeeping contingent'.

And finally, when it becomes completely impossible to continue disguising the involvement of the RF armed forces in the conflict, the situation evolves into a phase that has not yet been reached in the course of the Russian–Ukrainian war (although predicted by most analysts), and already demonstrated earlier in Moldova and Georgia: **a phase of public recognition of the invasion of the RF** through the unilateral 'deployment of peace-keeping forces' and the 'operation of peace enforcement'.

The following Sections of the present paper will review the actions of the RF at each of the phases of the conflict, and the possible measures that could be taken by national authorities, the army and the civil society of the country-victim of aggression to counter the aggression at each of the phases.

THE 'ZERO PHASE' OF THE 'HYBRID' WAR: PROPAGANDA PREPARATION FOR THE INVASION

When analysing the flows of Russian propaganda preceding the armed invasion, the propaganda messages addressed to different audiences must be clearly distinguished. A particular feature of Russian propaganda, which is alien to the Western audience, and for that reason often underestimated, is that such propaganda is in principle an instrument of state policy. Considering

the nature of the modern Russian state this means it is an instrument of the special services and the army, and seeks fundamentally practical objectives – an information accompaniment for the future military-political expansion of Russia. In Western societies the so-called PsyOps (Psychological Operations) and MISO (Military Information Support Operations) are a prerogative of a narrow circle of military specialists, while the civil media primarily seek to ensure objective information for society and provide a forum for free discussion on any issues in society. In modern Russia the entire media sphere is essentially an instrument of a 'big global MISO', and has to be viewed from those positions. The general principle of the foreign policy of Russia – victors are not judged – extends to propaganda, and 'anything that facilitates the objectives of Russia is good and justified a priori. As a result, the Russian media are not affected by such restrictions, which is considered the norm for the Western media world. This concerns both journalist ethics, whose principles are not mandatory for the Russian press, and the most general principles of informing society: the necessity to produce verified facts, and then allowing different opinions and views based on such facts to be voiced. Russian propaganda is not bound by an obligation to verify facts, nor do its communications have to be based in any way on actual events. This is to a large extent incomprehensible for Western analysts. To understand Russian media they must not be compared with the modern Western media space, but rather with the media of totalitarian regimes of the USSR, Nazi Germany and North Korea, or with George Orwell's 'ministry of truth'. Normal commonplace practice for Russian media is a systemic description of completely invented events, which then serves as a basis for building up a system of 'interpretations' eventually forming the 'public opinion'. This fact, which is today more than obvious for many Ukrainians, could not have been perceived even in Ukraine until quite recently, because we have become so accustomed to the standards and principles of the media in the free world. This approach is even more difficult for citizens of the Baltic States to understand. However, without understanding the full disassociation of the messages of the Russian media from real life, and their full dependence on the demands of the political leadership of the Kremlin, it is not possible to forecast the nature of information attacks on the part of the RF, and prepare to counter them. It should be accepted as a given that the Russian media have formed their own 'picture of the world', which has little to do with reality, and that the people who are constantly receiving information from the Russian media have developed a completely unrealistic understanding of the world surrounding them. In fact, victims of the 'Russian world' propaganda live in their isolated imaginary world, which is substantially different from ours, and in critical situations they will act based on their 'distorted' image of the world. Unless this is well understood, their actions might seem meaningless and unpredictable, therefore we will have to identify the principal conceptions of their fictional world, and seek to understand the principle motives for the behaviour of the people from the 'Russian world'.

The ideologists of the Kremlin itself do not conceal this approach of theirs towards the media sphere. While the media are perceived in Western countries as, primarily, an institution for the formation of a free society, and PsyOps and MISOs are used only to a very limited extent (only in regions affected by active military actions, primarily in zones near the front), in the first decade of the twenty-first century Russia developed and formulated an integrated and complete concept of a 'war of consciousness', i.e. 'war on the consciousness'. In the opinion of the authors of the concept, who are known for their affinity to the Kremlin (Michael Kalahsnikov),[20] the purpose of the 'war of consciousness' is the destruction of the human consciousness of a specific type and forms', while the optimal outcome is considered to be the destruction of the type of consciousness not favourable for Russia, by way of propaganda 'brain washing', and the physical preservation of the 'carrier of the consciousness'. Having won the minds of the majority in the 'consciousness war', the population of the territory claimed by Russia, who have remained susceptible to the propaganda of the 'carrier of the unacceptable types of the consciousness' now have to be subjected to a 'conventional' physical destruction by military and police means. Thus, Russia has been for a long time conducting an undeclared 'war of consciousness' aimed at destruction against the West, and especially, against the former republics of the USSR, and against which we provide little or no opposition, as we are not used to seeing developments in the information area as part of a military conflict pending its transition to a 'hot' phase. The Ukrainian experience, however, demonstrates that the transition from the 'war of consciousness' towards the armed forms of a 'hybrid' war is a speedy process, and that the 'war for consciousness' is a good description of the preparation for a direct military invasion.

The most significant attribute of the 'war on consciousness' and yet underestimated by Western analysts is not its appeal to rational arguments but rather its appeal to the deepest spheres of emotions that are mainly formed at a subconscious level. The key task for the Russian propaganda machine from the long-term perspective is not only the communication of individual rational messages (ideas), as a formation of the value system of individuals, where anything that is 'Russian' is automatically perceived as 'own' and undeniably 'good', and everything else different from what is being proposed by Russia – as 'strange', manifestly 'hostile' and 'doubtful'. In the course of the 'war on consciousness' the Russian propaganda first builds a system of benchmark cultural codes, similar to the 'friend/foe' aviation radio codes, and installs subconscious 'filters' through which the individual properly trained by the propaganda subsequently perceives all the incoming information. And it is only on top of those 'codes' and filters' installed in the subconscious levels that some 'propaganda of the current moment' is offered – some specific 'facts' (actual, one-sidedly presented, or utterly fictional), and the arguments, i.e. specific

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20   http://www.e-reading.club/chapter.php/24957/27/Kalashnikov,_Krupnov_3_Gnev_orka.html

direct messages. Without understanding this it will remain an eternal enigma for us, why the pro-Russian minded audience refuse to accept seemingly apparent facts and rational arguments, at the same time easily believe totally absurd and completely ungrounded communications (for instance, the story about a 'ritually crucified Russian new-born baby' by Ukrainian nationalists in Sloviansk,'[21] about the 'construction in Odessa, Nikolayev and Donetsk of Ukrainian Nazi concentration camps', or 'about the compiling by Ukrainian authorities of hit lists of people of ethnic Russian origin'). When projecting the actions of the Russian 'fifth column' in our countries we have to understand that anything communicated from our information sources (even in the cases when this information physically reaches them, because as a rule most of the Russian media audience do not try to get to know alternative sources – both because of the language barrier and because of the subconscious attitude of 'mistrust to anything not Russian) – will be 'filtered' by the consciousness which has been heavily processed by the propaganda as 'false by default', while any absurd thought coming from the subconsciously 'own' source will be perceived without any critique, based on the 'presumption of confidence'.[22]

The nature of Russian propaganda as an instrument of military-political influence as described earlier leads to one more important feature, which actually puts people from the Western world in a deadlock. Russian media may at the same time (and even by the same media means) communicate completely conflicting messages. For the western media such a state of affairs looks absurd, however, it is completely logical from the propaganda viewpoint as perceived in the RF in a conventional Stalinist-Goebbels sense: the mutually excluding and conflicting messages are simply addressed to different audiences to ensure that each of the audiences believe in what Moscow needs them to believe in and each message is specifically addressed to that audience.

In the context of preparing for an invasion in countries neighbouring Russia, it is necessary to make a clear distinction about the propaganda targeting different audiences, i.e.:

▸ propaganda addressed to citizens of Russia itself;

▸ propaganda addressed to the pro-Russian groups of influence in the country-victim of aggression;

▸ propaganda targeting the other population groups in the country-victim of aggression;

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21 http://www.1tv.ru/news/world/262978; http://slon.ru/russia/krovavyy_navet_v_efire_pervogo_kanala_izvinitsya_li_konstantin_ernst_pered_zritelyami-1126862.xhtml

22 Кара-Мурза С.Г. Русский путь: программа, вектор, враги. - Изд.„Алгоритм", 2014.

▶ propaganda addressed to the societies and political elite of the 'Old Europe' and America;

These different audiences are presented with completely different 'pictures' and are given messages that are often completely incompatible with each other, but generally preparing each of the audiences for the forthcoming Russian invasion.

The key aspects of the propaganda targeting citizens of Russia are the following:

The country-victim of aggression is inferior, it came into being 'accidentally', as a result of a historic mistake, or 'has been artificially torn away from Russia by the West'. Particularly important components of this propaganda 'bloc' are the theses about the collapse of the USSR as a 'geopolitical catastrophe', while the existence of the Russian Empire and the USSR are presented as 'historically logical', 'natural', and the period of life within the composition of Russia (USSR) is presented as the most successful and prosperous both for Russians, and all the other nations living in the empire. The Russians are presented as the only nation on the territory of the former empire, capable of independent state building, while the other nations are 'stateless' and 'inferior', always dependent on other great nations'.

A principal statement of this propaganda bloc is depriving the nations neighbouring Russia of their identity and presenting them invariably as subordinate entities capable of existing either under the influence and governance of Russia (which is preferable), or under the influence and governance of other 'great' states – competitors to Russia (which is not desirable). Thus, the current political independence of the Baltic States and Ukraine is viewed exceptionally as a result of 'the victory of the West against the USSR in the Cold War', that is as a passive 'separation' of the countries from Russia as a result of external aggression, rather than as an outcome of the independence movement of the indigenous peoples of those countries. This deprivation of identity is a crucial prerequisite for the justification of the armed aggression against the countries in the eyes of the Russians – in the context of the 'Russian world' this is perceived not as aggression against independent countries, but rather as a 'repartition of spheres of influence between Russia and the West'.[23]

Part of this propaganda bloc is the presentation of the national-liberation movements of the former countries of the USSR as marginal groups, which have never been any serious military threat or been supported by most of the population. Modern Russian propaganda has fully revived the image of the national-liberation movements of the Ukrainian and the Baltic States as they

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23   Кара-Мурза С.Г. Экспорт революции: Ющенко, Саакашвили. - Изд. «Эксмо», 2005.

were during the time of the Stalinist propaganda. The Russian audience are presented with images of 'banderovists', 'forest brothers' exceptionally as 'traitors', 'the Nazis' and the 'allies of Hitler'. These images are then followed by conclusions specifically important in the context of the anticipated invasion: first – about their dependence and inspiration from the outside (initially by Nazi Germany, later by the USA's CIA) of all anti-Soviet liberation movements, and their Nazi nature. The second conclusion refers to an extrapolation of distorted images such as of the 'forest brothers' and members of the OUN[24] upon all modern opponents of Russian influence in post-Soviet countries. Thus, the Russians are prepared to fight against marginal Nazi groups that have accidentally managed to gain power (as a result of the interference of the USA in competing with Russia for influence), and confronted Russia contrary to the opinion of the majority of the population of Ukraine, Belarus, the Baltic States and other post-Soviet countries rather than against independent democratic states. In the minds of the Russians most of the population of those countries suffers under the pro-American and Nazi regimes and want to be protected by the Russians – just as they always wished for despite the various 'banderovists' and other 'Nazi bandits'.[25]

This image is complemented with a description of the 'inferiority' of the military forces of the state-victim of aggression, which is known in advance as not capable of any serious confrontation with the Russian army. Thus, Russians are being prepared for a fast and victorious campaign and not for a long-lasting war with significant numbers of casualties. In case (as happened in the East of Ukraine) the campaign turns out to be protracted, the Russian propaganda refers to its 'backup' message, telling the Russians that the Russian army and their local allies are being confronted by 'forces of the USA and NATO', rather than by the local national army, which simultaneously explains the losses in the Russian army, and additionally justifies the aggression in the eyes of the Russians (a war against the USA and NATO in a foreign territory is perceived by Russian society not as aggression, but on the contrary, as the liberation of a territory 'inherently allied to Russia' from foreign occupation). The author of the present paper has had a chance to personally interrogate Russian volunteers who were absolutely convinced that they were going to Ukraine to fight 'against Americans', and were very surprised when instead of the 'occupation American troops' they saw Ukrainian soldiers and officers.

Ranking second in importance in terms of the deprivation of the identity of the country-victim of aggression is the message of the Russian internal propaganda on the 'oppression of Russians' in the country-victim of aggression. The

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24   OUN - Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (Організація українських націоналістів) – a Ukrainian public-political movement operating in 1929, with the goal to establish a Ukrainian Sobor Independent State, also its maintaining and development. *Editor's comment*

25   Калашников М., Бунтовский С. Независимая Украина. Крах проекта. - Изд. „Эксмо", 2009.

Russians are being persuaded that the local 'puppet', 'corrupt' and 'dependent' regimes in the post-Soviet countries are pursuing a discriminatory policy against local ethnic Russians. The policy ranges from measures depriving them of voting rights, citizenship and political freedoms, being prohibited from using the Russian language, persecution in their work places, and eventually being 'beaten up on the streets for using the Russian language' by local Nazis with the connivance of the authorities.

It should be clearly understood that the difference between the circumstances described above and real life is in no way an obstacle for Russian propaganda. In the picture of the world created by the Russian media the Russians residing in Kazakhstan, Georgia, Ukraine and the Baltic States are oppressed and discriminated against, which is sufficient reason for the Russians to develop a hatred towards the Ukrainians and the Balts, and for justifying the intervention for the purpose of 'protecting compatriots from the repressions of Nazis'.

Another part of the message given to Russians is the alienation of the 'Russians', 'Russian-speaking people' and all other ethnic minorities ('non-indigenous population' in the terminology of the Russian propaganda) in the country-victim of aggression, which allows the Russian media to describe potential 'victims of the Nazi repressions' who are seeking protection from the RF, as a significant part of the population in the country-victim of the oppression (up to half of the population in the case of Estonia, Kazakhstan, Latvia, and Ukraine), or even as a majority of the population on significant territories (North-Eastern region of Kazakhstan, the Crimea, South-Eastern part of Ukraine).

The propaganda targeting the compatriots in the country-victim of aggression in essence is no different from the propaganda designed for the audience in Russia, although it has slightly different emphases. A significant role is given to the formation of the idea of unity among Russians regardless of the modern ('temporary' in the terminology of modern Russian propaganda) state frontiers. In addition to creating an idealised positive image of the historical and modern Russia as an agreeable place to live, and a country which is successful in the modern world (this is perhaps the most prominent difference from the propaganda addressed to the Russian audience domestically, where idealisation of modern Russia is not possible, and the focus is then on the development of the image of the enemy).

Significant attention is dedicated to cultivating all forms of nostalgia – both for Russia as an abstract 'historical motherland', and for the USSR as the 'golden age' in the memory of the current generations. A similar and seemingly innocent 'nostalgia' in reality is an extremely important component of the 'war on consciousness'. The 'myth about the golden age' in any national ideology is one of the key elements in national self-identification. The transposition of the

image of the 'golden age' forms a quite specific imperial self-identification, and is one of the key elements of the system, as described earlier, of 'subconscious filters' and the 'benchmark codes' of the 'Russian world', which shapes the determination by an individual of the current information, and makes him susceptible to any disinformation communicated by the Russian media and 'resistant' to rational arguments from 'non-Russian' sources.[26]

One of the key elements of the propaganda addressed in the first place to the domestic Russian audience, and to an equal extent to the 'compatriots', is the cultivation of a range of myths about the Second World War and the victory of the USSR in it. The myth of the 'Great Patriotic War', and the 'Great Victory' plays in the modern set of mythologies and ideologies of the 'Russian world' an equally important role as the 'sacred' triad of 'Orthodoxy, Sovereignty, Nationalism' in the ideology of Tsarist Russia. Furthermore, the anti-historical character of such mythology completely transposed into modern Russian propaganda from Stalinist times, and its discrepancy with the facts publicly known for the non-Russian audience are compensated by the emotional load in presenting information, and the prohibition in the Russian media sphere of any criticism of such myths, or even of any cautious discussions regarding their reasonableness.

The role of the 'Great Patriotic War' in modern Russian propaganda can hardly be overestimated: the myth is part of the crucially important mental construction cultivated by the Kremlin, i.e. the identification of all modern Russians, Russian-speakers, and the broad sense of the word, the 'post-Soviet' people with the 'Red Army – the victor of fascism', and a symmetrical identification of all opponents of the modern 'Russian world' with 'fascism'. The author of the present paper, along with other Ukrainians had a chance to see this, in spring 2014, when the St George Ribbon, so diligently cultivated as part of the 'Great victory' myth, became an identifier of the Russian 'fifth column' in the times of the putsches of the 'Russian spring' on the entire territory from the Crimea and Donbass to Odessa and Kharkov. Wearing those ribbons pro-Russian fighters went into battle with the Ukrainian army, and used the ribbon to mark their uniforms and occupied buildings. The self-perception as the direct continuers of the 'great war against fascism' is the principal motivation of Russian fighters in the Russian–Ukrainian war, and, perhaps, a single ideologeme of the Russian propaganda, that by its power of persuasion is comparable with the ideas of struggles for national independence, civil rights and freedoms so motivating our fighters. Seeing St George Ribbons on the streets of the Baltic States should not be ignored, because it is those ribbons that mark the most persistent part of the ideology of the 'Russian world', and the part of the carriers of such ideology which psychologically is best prepared for armed struggle.

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26 Стариков Н.В., Беляев Д. Крым. Россия. История. - Изд. „Питер", 2015 г.

It is significant that the cultivation of the 'Great victory' myth leads to a very important side effect: the building of the image of modern Russia as an 'outpost of the anti-fascist struggle in the world'. This incorrect extrapolation of the anti-fascist role of the USSR (also mythical, rather than realistically historical) upon modern Russia allows the actual state of affairs to be blurred in Russian society, the one which actually has a series of attributes of typical fascism. The authoritarian nature of the Russian regime and the national-patriotic and orthodox state ideology driven by it is closer to the typical European national-fascism of the 1930s in a number of respects, than to the formally 'internationalist' ideology of the USSR. But disclosing Russian fascism and any fight against it in the Russian media sphere (as well as in the Russian propaganda addressed to the western audience) is like a 'mirror' replaced by the on-going rhetoric about the 'historical anti-fascist role of Russia inherited by it from the Great victory of the USSR in the Great Patriotic War'.

Another none the less important side effect of the exploitation of the 'Great victory' mythology (keenly characterised by the few independent intellectuals still remaining in Russia as 'victory madness') was the full rehabilitation in modern Russian propaganda of the Stalinist totalitarian regime. The mass Stalinist repressions, which were condemned even in the late Soviet propaganda and media, are once again being rehabilitated. The annihilation of non-Russian nations in the USSR and Eastern Europe is described and fully justified as an indispensable part of the 'struggle with fascism' (to which automatically any liberation movement of the nations in the USSR are attributed), while the annihilation of Russians is treated as unpleasant, but not significant 'transgressions'. Thus, for the modern adherents of the 'Russian world', the transposition to the current situation of the developments in 1940–1950, self-identification with the 'heroes of the Red Army and the NKVD', and equating the enemies of Putin's Russia to 'Bandera fascists' (Lithuanian, Latvian, etc.) is a totally natural and normal psychological condition prepared by the multi-year heavy influence of the propaganda.

Within the propaganda addressed to the 'compatriots' a significant role is dedicated to highlighting actual and fictitious examples of 'discrimination against Russians (and all 'Russian-speaking and 'non-indigenous) in their countries of residence. The principal objective of this propaganda bloc is to fuel intolerance with respect to the 'title nation' (a common term exploited by Russian propaganda to define the indigenous population of post-Soviet states; the term itself bearing significant ideological connotation – an implicit indication that the territories were only formally designated as 'Lithuanian', 'Ukrainian' or 'Estonian', while in reality those nations never had their own states and were neither the majority nor the indigenous people; the term 'indigenous people' is studiously avoided by Russian propaganda). The ultimate goal is to develop among the non-indigenous population a feeling of constant fear and insecurity and anticipation of 'oppressions' from the part of the 'title nations'.

The next superstructure above this ideologeme is the presentation of Russia as a great country, able and prepared to defend 'compatriots' throughout the world. This perception in combination with the constant subconscious fear of 'oppression' and 'repressions' is a very important and prerequisite condition in the preparation for an armed invasion: in addition to the always small groups of 'Russian fighters', prepared, under their St George Ribbon, to join the battle against the local 'fascist', measures are taken to form a significantly larger group of 'unfortunate victims' who are ready to create for the Russian and world media a picture of shouting 'we are so few, we are being killed, Russia, come to defend us!'. As we will see later in the course of the Russian invasion of Ukraine it was specifically these frightened people, primarily women and the elderly, that secured the legitimisation of the invasion by their public (quite peaceful, and therefore formally 'legitimate') demonstrations under the slogan 'Putin, send your army!'. In this respect it should be recalled that for the purpose of achieving the desired effect there does not necessarily need to be any actual threat of the 'oppression' of the minorities – the only requirement is the presence of such a threat in the perception of some of the non-indigenous population, developed and supported by propaganda from the outside.

The next part of the Russian propaganda is addressed to the indigenous population of the countries-prospective victims of the aggression. The key theses embedded in the consciousness of the indigenous population of the post-Soviet states are the following three provisions:

▶ Constant criticism of the national authorities. Externally this part of the propaganda may appear as commonplace in free societies' daily criticism of the authorities by their citizens, rightly considered to be one of the fundamentals of a democratic order. However, the distinction of the criticism from pro-Russian sources is that every time not only are the actions of a specific official in a specific situation called into question, but doubt is studiously and consciously evoked in the efficacy of the entire system of the democratic order, and specifically – the efficiency, competence and integrity of national governments (all collectively, rather than each individually) on the entire post-Soviet territory. Gradually a perception on the inefficiency of the national self-governance as a phenomenon is developed, and at the same time quite inconspicuously introducing the idea of 'more efficient' governance in Russia, or the USSR.

▶ Formation of an anti-western discourse. The propaganda creates and imposes the perception of a 'colonial approach towards young independent states on the part of the abstract 'West' (which is contrasted with the former USSR, Central and Eastern Europe), and specifically on the part of the European Union, the USA and NATO.

'Euro-sceptical' and anti-American attitudes present within a smaller part of society in all European countries, are presented as dominant and specifically beneficial to the young independent states, which have recklessly exchanged their union with Russia for a colonial dependence on the USA and the EU'.

▶ Presentation of the unlimited military and economic power of Russia, and the physical impossibility by the young independent states to organise any efficient resistance to the Russian invasion. In combination with the thesis on the inefficiency of the international security system (regretfully, the invasion of Ukraine demonstrated that this thesis of the Russian propaganda is not unfounded) this develops a 'capitulating' attitude in the society and the governing elite of the post-Soviet states, and created preconditions for a repetition of the 'Czech scenario of 1938', or the 'Baltic scenario of 1940'.

And finally, Russian propaganda addresses a separate package of messages to the audiences in western European countries.

In this 'export version' of the Russian propaganda the main focus is on discrediting the national governments of the post-Soviet independent governments, and exploiting a number of psychological complexes that Europeans developed after the Second World War.

The first bloc of messages is designed to create an opinion of the extreme inefficiency and overwhelming corruption of the national governments of post-Soviet countries. Efforts are made to create an image of a 'post-Soviet Africa' where the governments of the independent countries are presented through typical stereotypes of mass consciousness about such countries as Congo or Zimbabwe, or, at best, as 'the ever-fighting Balkans'. In addition, strong emphasis is placed on the contrast between those 'unstable' and 'unpredictable' countries and the 'stable' and 'reliable' Russia – 'a traditional partner of Western Europe'. As a result, Western Europeans start developing an opinion on the lack of self-sufficiency of the post-Soviet states, their instability threatening all of Europe, and finally – a subconscious misleading dilemma: 'either we (western Europeans) have to take responsibility for the developments in those 'wild' countries, and make some serious attempts to stabilise and develop them, or the mission may be delegated to their previous 'mother country' – Russia, and refuse to intervene in the post-Soviet territory'. The temptation for Europeans to recognise the entire post-Soviet territory to be in 'the sphere of interests and responsibility of Russia' is strong enough, and in addition is studiously supported by Russian propaganda.

The second bloc of messages appeals to the complexes developed in Western Europe as a result of its acquaintance with only one version of the totalitarian

regimes of the twentieth century – German Nazism – as well as the feeling of guilt among Europeans for their inadequate resistance to Nazism in the 1930s–1940s. Any manifestation of nationalism provokes among western Europeans (and especially among intellectuals, political elite and the mass media) a literally hysterical reaction up to the complete loss of ability of critical perception. Russian propaganda has learned to successfully exploit this psychological complex and to present all anti-Russian powers and movements in the post-Soviet area, as well as most national political elite and governments, as 'neo-Nazis', which renders any sympathy or support for them on the part of Western Europe impossible. In the course of the Russian–Ukrainian war the author of the present paper had more than one occasion to witness the efficiency of such propaganda: starting with the support for the Russian intervention by European left-wing parties, which even detached troops of volunteers to fight alongside the Russian forces in the East of Ukraine, because it was a 'war against fascism'. Quite recently a leading Italian publishing house refused to publish a collection of Ukrainian poetry, as 'Ukrainians consider themselves to be heirs of the OUN, and the OUN is an ally of Hitler'.

Additional speculation about Russian propaganda in the West in this case addressed not to the governing elite, but on the contrary – to the European marginal circles is the support for European anti-Americanism and 'Euro-scepticism' in combination with the imposed perception of the post-Soviet countries as the 'stage of a big game between Russia and the USA'. In this context post-Soviet countries are treated and presented to the western European audience as objects, rather than independent subjects, this gives rise to a dilemma: 'outrageous hegemony of the USA or control of Russia, conventional for the region, where the sympathies of European isolationists concerned about the confrontation with the USA and anti-globalists will naturally turn to Russia'.

Thus, the principal target groups to which the Russian propaganda is addressed beyond Russia (where the target is the entire society) are in particular:

In the countries-potential victims of the aggression:

▸ Local Russians and other Slavs, for which an entire set of myths has been prepared, including an understanding about a common identification of all Slavs as 'Russians in the broad sense of the word' a myth about the greatness and the glory of the USSR-Russia, or ideas about the traditional 'superiority' of the Russians against the local 'title nation' ('chuchonsas, 'labusy'' 'churki', etc.), and on the 'accidental character' and the 'irregularity' of the emergence of the post-Soviet independent states.

▸ Non-Russian ethnic minorities for whom Russian propaganda has

prepared myths about the Empire (Russia-USSR) as a 'common home for all nations' (as opposed to the national independent states which are allegedly intended for the 'title' nations only) a set of myths about the 'threat of local Nazis', and as a result – presentation of Russia as the only power able to protect the minorities from the harassment of local Nazis'.

▶ An additional set of myths specifically targeting the ethnic minorities, which in their own history have had a period of 'imperial' states (Poles, Hungarians), – for all of them the propaganda has developed a set of concepts about the superiority of all imperial nations over the non-imperial nations, while escalating nostalgia about the eras of several big empires which were 'accidentally' and 'unfairly' divided into a number of 'small countries – historic misconceptions'. As an extreme manifestation of such propaganda, Vladimir Zhirinovsky, an unofficial representative of the Kremlin, the vice-speaker of the Russian Duma (he is recognised as officially delegated to publicly communicate anything that Putin would find inappropriate to speak out about for diplomatic reasons.), the Poles, Hungarians and Romanians were offered to divide Ukraine among their states and Russia along the borders that existed prior to 1939. Attempts by the Kremlin to refer to such messages addressed to the Polish community in Lithuania are not improbable.

▶ The Left and the Liberals, intimidated in the same way by the Russian propaganda as ethnic minorities, and the fear of 'national fascism of the title nations', with a minor difference that whereas for the Russian audience 'fascists' are the entire indigenous nation and the national government, for the more informed Left-Liberal audience the main 'bogeyman' is the local ultra-right groups, while the government is presented as 'secretly sympathising with the ultra-right parties' or as 'incapable of containing such parties'.

In the western European countries:

▶ Left and Liberal intellectuals for which Russian propaganda has developed a set of myths about the 'dominance of the national-fascists in the new independent states' and the 'traditional anti-fascist role of Russia'.

▶ Conservative and right-wing politicians who are seduced in the first place by prospects of economic cooperation (including corruption schemes – suffice it to recall the examples of 'personal friends of Putin' and 'partners' of Gazprom: Schroeder in Germany, Sarkozy in France or Berlusconi in Italy) with the big and rich Russia in combination with

the promises of Russia ensuring 'stability' and 'order' in the entire post-Soviet territory. In other words, the scheme offered could be defined as 'resource flows from Russia and absence of any problems on the borders with the EU in exchange for the recognition of the entire ex-USSR zone as a Russia-controlled area'.

▸ Ultra-Left groups which, as a rule, receive direct financial subsidies from Russia in exchange for active propaganda on the model of cooperation of Europe with the 'stable' and 'reliable' imperial Russia within the borders of the former USSR, or even the Tsarist empire (a prominent example is the National Front party of Marine La Pen financed directly from the RF).

▸ Anti-globalists, anti-Americanists and 'euro-sceptics' that are partly financed from the RF, and partly blindly used as 'useful idiots'; a special myth prepared for this audience refers to the 'confrontation of Russia and the USA', and the independence of the post-Soviet states as an 'American project'.

GROUPS OF INFLUENCE USED IN THE COURSE OF THE INVASION

Whereas the target groups (audience) to which the Russian propaganda is addressed are quite numerous, the active Russian 'groups of influence' represent a significantly smaller share of the population of the country-victim of aggression. Nevertheless, in the initial stage of a 'hybrid' war the role of such groups is disproportionally significant, which makes it necessary to describe them thoroughly in the present paper, and to recommend remembering them (in case democratic legislation does not permit neutralising them in advance) and thoroughly monitoring their activities.

First of all, it is worthwhile paying attention to a circle of society, which is seemingly not related to Russia, the local ultra-right groups and radical nationalist organisations. As such groups and organisations, as a rule, declare manifested anti-Russian rhetoric, at first sight, treating them as a plan of the Russian invasion seems illogical. However, in fact these groups have been given an important role in the preparation and legitimisation plan of the Russian invasion. By their origin, the ultra-right and radical-nationalist groups in the country-victim of the invasion may be attributed to two different types: one case refers to actually existing groups that appeared independently, and whose members are genuine patriots of their country, but hold ultra radical views. If there are no such groups, the RF special services begin to form fictitious ultra-

right groups from among recruited agents (following the scheme developed by the NKVD in the years of fighting Ukrainian and Lithuanian partisans, when the chekists (security police) established fictitious rebel groups on a huge scale for the purpose of identifying the actual national liberation underground groups and imitating the 'atrocities of the nationalists').

Irrespective of the genesis of the radical groups, their further role in the context of the Russian invasion was fairly clearly defined, and the existing radical nationalists were equally suitable for the purpose of fulfilling the role (exploited 'blindly' in the role of 'useful idiots'), as were the paid-up fictitious groups. In the context of the Russian invasion it is specifically the radical groups that are assigned the role of 'bogeymen', which will be used by the propaganda to intimidate the ethnic minorities, highlighting their fear of the 'bloody Nazis' and so they become inclined to appeal to the RF for armed protection.

At the same time, it is specifically the radical nationalist groups (actually existing or fictitious) that will be presented by the Russian propaganda to western European countries and the USA to build up pro-Russian, 'anti-fascist' public opinion, and, as a result, eventually neutralise the international system of collective security, i.e. to prepare and justify the refusal by the western democratic states to provide military and political assistance to the country-victim of aggression.

The example of Ukraine clearly demonstrates the successfulness of the policy in both directions: Russian propaganda succeeded in creating an image of the 'fearful Ukrainian Nazis-banderovists' – in modern Ukraine identified with the organisation 'Right Sector' (and to a lesser extent with the historically older organisations OUN-UPA and UNA-UNSO) – and communicating that image to the mass consciousness of a fairly large share of the Russian-speaking population and ethnic minorities of Ukraine. To a larger or lesser extent this was achieved throughout the country, while in the Crimea and Donbass the fear of a 'Bandera massacre' reached the level of mass hysteria, and there were demonstrations requesting that Russian armed forces be brought in for 'protection against banderovists and the Right Sector'. Multiple communications of the artificially constructed image of 'Ukrainian Nazis' in the media sphere of western Europe have been one of the key factors restricting assistance to Ukraine by western countries until now; recently the US Congress passed a resolution prohibiting American instructors from training fighters of the Azov' regiment of the National Guard of Ukraine as they were recognised to be a 'Neo-Nazis formation'.[27]

It should be clearly understood that the exercise of influence by a group does not depend on the actual scale of operations of ultra-right forces, and is completely

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27   http://korrespondent.net/world/3526564-konhress-ssha-zapretyl-voennuui-podderzhku-batalona-azov

unrelated to their actual 'aggressiveness', or, on the contrary – 'peacefulness'. The very fact of their existence, symbols, their appearance and rhetoric are sufficient to create a propaganda 'picture', where the operations of such groups will be enough to create an atmosphere of fear and mobilise the pro-Russian circles of the population, and a political coloration appropriate to justify the objectives of the Russian invasion. Certainly, every public action of the ultra-right, and especially at critical moments of the Russian invasion, makes it easier for the Kremlin propaganda and accelerates the creation of the 'bogeyman' – necessary for the justification of the military intervention. Every local radical painting a swastika on a wall or posing for a picture with a Nazi salute operates independently, irrespective of his intentions, as a component of 'Putin's plan' for occupying the country, regardless of whether in reality such an individual is mentally an honest patriot (a 'useful idiot' of the Kremlin), or he is a conscientious paid agent of the FSB. However, in all cases it should be borne in mind that even in the absence of any actual ultra-right movements they will be in any case imitated and 'painted' by the Russian propaganda machine. In my opinion, the modern tracing of the appearance and operation of such groups (actual and fictitious) is one of the most important defence assignments of the special services and the civil society of the country-potential victim of aggression.

Another source of active influence assigned a significant role in the early stages of the invasion, is the local large and medium capital, in its financial operations closely related to Russia.

In order to fully understand the role of the group it should be recalled that in modern Russia there is no free market, and there is no large business that is not closely and directly related with the state apparatus of the RF. Following several successive 'Mafia wars', redistribution of markets and spheres of influence by the early 2000, a single ruling clan came into being in Russia, based on a close 'symbiosis' of former special services officers, active officers of the FSB and the GRU, the general officers and managers of the major fuel and energy corporations. For at least the last 10 years this clan has been controlling all significant financial flows in the RF, and its foreign trade activities. Thus, all financial flows related to the RF, and the local businesses in post-Soviet countries are necessarily controlled by the special services of the RF, and the reportedly 'private' Russian companies. In addition to their direct 'market' purposes to generate profit they are necessarily used as an instrument of RF state policy (such use is an essential precondition, failing to comply with which Russian companies cannot engage in foreign economic activities).

Within the scheme of a Russian invasion, a significant role is assigned to the national business related to the RF. In addition to the 'agents of influence', i.e. lobbyists of the interests of the RF in times of peace (as a rule, this is realised through financing local politicians – so that formally the funding is generated

not from the RF, but from the national capital, however actually received from Russia by way of granting preferences with respect to trade deals to 'loyal' businessmen), the local business is assigned an important role in the neutralisation of any resistance in the initial stages of the open aggression. It is specially the large pro-Russian business that will use all its influence to delay the emergence of any armed resistance to the aggression. Thus, a number of large pro-Russian businessmen, led by oligarch Rinat Achmetov played a tragic role in the development of the Donbass war – they offered their services as 'mediators in peace negotiations' on several occasions, insisting that the government delay armed operations to neutralise pro-Russian terrorists and invaders until the occupation of Donbass by Russian forces was completed, by which time the only option for Ukraine was to launch full-scale military operations.[28] What can be expected in this situation is active actions from pro-Russian businesses designed to disguise the true nature of the aggression (pro-Russian businessmen will facilitate the presentation of the actual development as an 'internal conflict'), and causing delays by way of 'peace negotiations'.

Following the inevitable beginning of the armed national resistance, the pro-Russian business will exploit all its lobbying abilities to delay an official declaration of the status of war with Russia (as 'interfering with the vitally required turnover'), which consequently creates legal obstacles for actions of the armed forces of the country-victim of aggression, and prevents it from appealing for international military assistance. In Ukraine the pro-Russian large business was so successful in its tactics that even after a full year of active military actions, no official status of war with Russia has been declared. This is a legal obstacle for the Ukrainian army in the zone near the front, and a serious hindrance in obtaining military-technical assistance from NATO countries.

The example of Georgia also showed that in the case of failure to neutralise the resistance in the country-victim of aggression by political means, pro-Russian business may be used for the urgent formation of a pro-Russian political opposition which will actively compromise the national government. Having weakened the position of the government, this opposition will come to power by way of a military coup, or by way of internal democratic elections inspired at an inappropriate military time.[29]

In addition to the legitimate large pro-Russian business, local criminal circles may play a significant role in the invasion plan. It should be borne in mind that the system of the criminal mind with its internal hierarchy and steady relations was formed back in the years of the USSR, and the collapse of the empire did

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28 http://lb.ua/news/2014/04/08/262295_ahmetov_otvez_separatistov.html; http://ru.tsn.ua/politika/ahmetov-v-besede-s-separatistami-v-donecke-ya-bal-v-rot-vam-nravitsya-359421.html; http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2014/07/6/7031142/?attempt=1
29 http://inosmi.ru/sngbaltia/20140521/220464221.html

not lead to the full isolation of criminal groups of the new independent states. On the contrary, relations between the Russian criminal circles and organised crime groups in the former Soviet republics became even stronger, as some new profitable 'business', such as smuggling goods and people trafficking through the newly formed state borders, now complemented their operations. After the currently ruling clan of descendants of the special services of the USSR came to power in the RF, organised crime completely merged with the law enforcement authorities, as the illegal business and the organised crime groups became completely subordinated to the corrupt special services, in addition to the physical elimination of the leaders of the criminal word beyond the control of the special services.[30] Thus, the cooperation of the criminal groups in post-Soviet states with their Russian 'colleagues' actually means their cooperation with the FSB and the GRU of the RF.[31] Actually all the more or less significant criminal 'authorities' in the post-Soviet territory are in one way or another registered with the Russian special services and are controlled by them through blackmail.

As became evident from the analysis of the Russian invasion in the Crimea and Donbass, in the early stages, when the involvement of the RF armed forces is only minimal, the organised criminal groups play a very important role in imitating the 'people's resistance' and the 'citizen militia'.[32] They are assigned to control buildings of secondary significance and checkpoints and act as local 'quasi-militia', tasked with liquidating potential activists of the national resistance movement in the occupied territories. The latter function is extremely important, as the Russian armed forces do not have independent knowledge of the local national active members. In addition, in the early stages of the aggression they prefer to avoid the 'dirty' work and leave it to the local criminal circles. In exchange for carrying out such functions the criminal circles are guaranteed impunity, legalisation in the status of the 'people's militia', and the right to rob the population on the controlled territories.

Further the role of such a group may take a different path. In the Crimea the local criminals appeared sufficiently smart to shift, fairly quickly, from robberies and looting to legal operations, and even now perform certain roles in the occupational Russian administration.[33] In Donbass most of the criminals appeared unreliable when the war was at its height, creating problems by their incomplete subordination to the Russian military commanders. By now most of them have been killed, some in battles with the Ukrainian army (where they were usually sent ahead of the Russian troops as a 'human shield'), and some during operations of the FBS and GRU as part of the liquidation of 'processed

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30 http://kyiv.osp-ua.info/politics/27116-semen-mogilevich-v-proekte-tysjacheletie.html.
31 http://stringer-news.com/publication.mhtml?Part=48&PubID=18393
32   http://uapress.info/ru/news/show/25031/
33 http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/articles/2014/03/15/7018918/?attempt=2;   https://roadnews.wordpress.com/2014/03/01/братки-из-опг-сейлем-и-башмаки-воз/

material' and 'irreconcilable' fighters'.[34] However, in the early stages of the invasion this group played a very important role within the first organised armed formations of the occupants. Therefore, in the stage of aversion of the Russian invasion an important role may be played by the communication between army intelligence and the security services with the national criminal police, who are well informed about the local criminal groups and their relations.

The local mass media are also highly influential, either directly or indirectly through intermediaries, run by the Russian capital. In contrast to the genuine Russian media, the local media with Russian capital do not openly communicate false messages of the Kremlin propaganda, or blatant anti-State slogans. Within the framework of the invasion they are assigned a different role. Above all, it is specifically through the media that the Russian propaganda will be promoting the image of the 'horrible local Nazis', and those media will be the first to communicate about 'acts of vandalism', 'intimidated minorities' and other similar information at the same time seeking other objectives: maintaining the fear and neurosis of 'anticipating Nazism' among the minorities, and thus giving the Russian mass media an opportunity to refer to allegedly 'local primary sources' of information which will be later significantly exaggerated and presented in a much more radical and serious manner than has been received from the primary source (with reference to a 'local' publication) and broadcast in the international media sphere.

During the early stage of the armed invasion the local media owned by the Russian capital will be creating and maintaining the illusion of a 'civil conflict' camouflaging it under an external invasion for as long as possible. Further, the function includes preventing a resolute reaction of the national government and the patriotic community by calling on them to engage in different types of 'negotiations' and a 'peaceful resolution of the conflict', which, as we know is doomed to fail (as in fact there is nobody to hold the negotiations with – all decisions are taken in the Kremlin, rather than the local 'puppets' and only gives the occupants more time to strengthen their positions in the occupied territories.

And finally, with regard to the full-scale military actions the role of the 'local' media consists of constant and non-constructive criticism of the national government (while formally exercising in general patriotic rhetoric), and maximum exaggeration of the losses in the national army, the problems and unsolved issues related to supplies to the army and the organisation of defence, isolated (unavoidable in any war) instances of abuse and crimes by the military and special services officers in combat zones. In general, this media will be used to create an atmosphere of distrust towards the national authorities, commanders of the army, capitulationism and defeatism intended to persuade

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34   http://www.obzor24.in.ua/?p=861

society of the hopelessness of any armed resistance to Russia due to the inequality in the powers of the parties, the poor condition of the national army, and the inability of the national government to reverse the aggression due to its 'incompetence' and 'corrupt practices', etc. Thus, in Ukraine, the media owned by the Russian or pro-Russian capital, although officially using 'patriotic' and 'loyal' rhetoric have been, for more than half a year, presenting the war in the east of Ukraine as a 'civil' war. Following the forced acknowledgement of the Russian aggression the media launched an information campaign on the disruption of mobilisation, for that purpose using actual and fictitious facts on poor training and inadequate supplies for conscripts. This was supplemented by different communications from 'the mothers of soldiers', and other hysterical audiences intimidated by the mobilisation of their family members and not understanding the necessity of armed resistance to the aggression.

Non-government organisations financed from Russia may play a role similar to the one described earlier, camouflaged under civil society and formally promoting the values of democracy, liberalism, human rights and freedoms which are fairly natural for a healthy democratic society.

The author of the present paper holds liberal views with respect to most political issues, and the last thing he wants is to see his warnings taken as 'anti-liberal' propaganda or a summons for a 'witch hunt', or any restrictions upon human rights or freedoms. On the contrary, in the opinion of the author, the war for the independence of Ukraine that the country has been conducting since spring 2014, is simultaneously a war for liberal values, and the preservation of human and civil rights and freedoms which are destroyed and 'revoked' in all territories occupied by Russia. In this connection it is still necessary to distinguish the existing structures of a civil society which, although being in a position (or actually obliged, as this is one of their key functions in a healthy democratic society) to criticise national authorities, and sometimes even very harshly, disclose any facts of infringement of human rights, respond to that strictly, from the pseudo-civil organisations which in fact are bodies of influence of the 'Russian world' and thus facilitate a victory of totalitarianism and dictatorship over a civil society.

In contrast to the 'honest' structures of the 'Third Sector' pseudo-human rights defenders can be easily identified by their sources of funding (there may be among them some 'useful idiots' affected by propaganda and working for the Kremlin for free, but much more often they are financially maintained by Russia), and by the 'double standards' they rely on when assessing the current developments. They are fervent in detecting and criticising any failures or shortcomings in any way related to the national government, or national-character organisations, and at the same time they close their eyes to the significantly more conspicuous violations of human rights and freedoms (up

to mass killings or political repressions against the opposition) taking place in Russia, in the territories occupied by Russia, or in the countries-allies to Russia.

The role of such pseudo-defenders of human rights and pseudo-liberal organisations is very close to the role of the Russia-funded mass media described earlier; even more so, because as a rule they work in close collaboration.[35] The role of the pseudo-activities is to be the first to make provocative declarations about the threat of 'Nazism', 'repressions', or, on the contrary – inactivity of the national authorities, to draw up appeals to international organisations with absurd accusations against the national authorities or patriotic organisations. Due to the insignificance of such organisations their appeals by themselves would not have any tangible effect upon the course of affairs, however, they create the required formal motive, which is immediately used by the local pro-Russian, and directly Russian mass media. In addition, the declarations and statements of the marginal organisations, so insignificant in number, are communicated as 'authoritative', 'expert', 'reflecting public opinion', and as a result they create the information 'background' required for Russia both in the country-victim of aggression, and in the international media sphere.

Special attention should be devoted to the groups of active influence composed of the Russian (in the broad sense, it should not be forgotten that in the concept of the 'Russian world' the category of 'Russians' includes, as a minimum, all eastern Slavs) and other ethnic minorities.

On the whole, the groups of influence composed of people of Russian nationality should be broken down into two key parts: 'peaceful' groups, which do not directly participate in the armed invasion, but are still used for its political legitimisation; and which will form the basis for forming occupation para-military units in the initial stage of aggression.

The 'peaceful' groups are primarily represented by different organisations 'for learning the Russian language', 'protection of rights of Russian-speakers', 'preservation of Russian history and culture'. Those groups, which are particularly active, are, as a rule, are organisations participating in local elections on behalf of the 'Russian-speaking' minority, the Orthodox church organisations, and the organisations of veterans of the 'Great Patriotic' war.[36]

In the context of the plan of the Russian invasion such groups are assigned the role of 'ritual victim of Nazism' and 'applicants for assistance'. It is these organisations that are loudest in declaring the alleged 'Nazi threat' for the

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35   http://obozrevatel.com/politics/02786-na-vojne-vse-sredstva-horoshi-kak-finansiruyutsya-prorossijskie-or-ganizatsii-v-ukraine.htm
36   http://news.liga.net/articles/politics/877712-ravnenie_na_kreml_kto_v_ukraine_rabotaet_v_proros-siyskoy_nishe.htm

minorities, and at the right moment they make a public appeal to Russia with a request to send regular troops for protection against 'being killed by local Nazis'. Furthermore, in the initial stage of the invasion the organisations have the critical role of being a 'human shield' between the national army and the police, and the armed Russian invaders.

During the continuation of the armed conflict the groups continue to play a fairly significant role, legitimising the Russian military occupation by their public statements and public actions, creating the required 'decorations' and the 'crowd shots' in imitation of a Russian 'humanitarian mission', playing the 'victims' of the national army of the country-victim of aggression (for instance, as 'innocent victims of Ukrainian artillery shelling' in Donetsk and Lugansk) in the eyes of the international community. Members of such 'peaceful' groups are recruited to form a field agency directly related to the Russian para-military formations and the army, and to carry out intelligence work in the immediate battle area.

The key personnel of the Russian paramilitary are trained well ahead of the beginning of active military operations.[37] The following organisations became elite training centres for the Russian military troops in Ukraine:

- local branches of illegally operating Russian ultra-right nationalist organisations (some are outlawed in Russia itself for their radical views, however, they are supported by the FSB of the RF on the territories of neighbouring states);

- legal youth military-sport pro-Russian organisations, often camouflaged as organisations for 'patriotic education' of the youth, in which the 'patriotic education' is perceived in the Soviet style and traditions;

- youth sport (mainly, wrestling) clubs related to the local criminal world;[38]

- organisations involved in dispatching young people to summer training camps in Russia under the pretext of 'cultural and educational exchange';[39]

- organisations of the Russian 'Kozatstvo' (formally – ethnic-cultural and educational organisations, but having paramilitary structure and discipline);[40]

- organisations of veterans of Afghanistan and other local conflicts (so-called 'fighters-internationalists');[41]

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37   http://www1.kasparov.org/material.php?id=53D607F597C40&section_id=43452FA6D4743&subject_id=183

38   http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/articles/2014/02/6/7012996/; http://argumentua.com/stati/konets-oplota-evgenii-zhilin-otvetit-za-banditizm

39   http://obozrevatel.com/politics/25467-litva-podozrevaet-rossiyu-v-verbovke-detej-dlya-podgotovki-gosu-darstvennyih-izmennikov.htm

40   http://www.unian.net/politics/911220-sbu-zaderjala-atamana-obyedineniya-kazakov-kryima.html

41   http://www.interfax.ru/world/362151

- organisations of the so-called 'history re-enactors' engaged in the reconstruction of battles of historic wars; a number of field commanders of Russian units in Eastern Ukraine were brought up from the 're-enactors', including such scandalous character as the 'Minister of Defence of the DPR' Girkin–'Strelkov'.[42] An interesting, however, quite logical observation is that most often activists of the Russian paramilitary formations were the people who in their 'historic re-enactments', as a rule, played the roles of fighters of the Red Army, the NKVD units or the Whites. Such 'military re-enactment' societies should be given sufficient attention fairly early on, as one of the 'risk groups' – a potential place for the concentration of the Russian agency.

Finally, informal societies of retired military officers of the Soviet Army, in particular, officers of the KGB and the GRU of the USSR played an important role in the formation of Russian paramilitary units in the Crimea and Eastern Ukraine. Such societies are not legal in any form and earlier had quite a low profile. As the developments in the Crimea and Donbass have shown a large number of retired military officers ordinarily living a fairly peaceful life (most often under the 'cover' of running a legal small business) appeared to be members of the agency network of the Russian special services; the agency network was formed and was 'conserved' long before the beginning of active military operations, and at the beginning of the invasion were ordered to come out from the underground and shift to active operations. It was those retired officers (in collaboration with leaders of military-sport pro-Russian organisations) that became the first 'field commanders' of the Russian paramilitary formations and the first 'mayors" and 'governors' in occupied towns. Perfect knowledge of local conditions, the population, the presence of a network of contacts, well-established in the course of many years made such officers much more efficient than the 'fresh' invaders directly from Russia. A prominent illustration of the important role of such retired officers is a colonel of the GRU RF Igor Bezler (nickname – 'Bes', Engl. – 'Devil') who has for many years lived under the cover of a small businessman (owner of a mortuary), and after the beginning of the 'Russian spring' led the operation for the occupation of the town of Gorlovka, and became one of the field commanders of the 'army of the DPR'.[43]

In addition to the typical public organisations having apparent leaders, clear participants, and in most cases a legal status, in the course of the 'hybrid' war against Ukraine, Russia for the first time used new types of mass organisations that were earlier used mostly by opposition unions of the Ukrainian 'Revolution

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42 https://cgrozev.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/igor-vsevolodovich-girkin.pdf; http://ru.reuters.com/article/topNews/idRUKBN0DV10120140515?sp=true; http://www.mk.ru/social/2014/05/28/igor-strelkov-kak-knizhnyiy-malchik-stal-komanduyuschim-opolcheniem-donbassa.html
43 http://blogs.pravda.com.ua/authors/goncharenko/534e20581d582/; http://www.donbassvdv.org/index.php?content=news&id_news=114; http://uprobrgrl.ucoz.ru/news/voenno_patrioticheskij_festival_my_iz_budushhego/2012-03-23-1720

of Dignity' ('Maidan') and 'Arabian spring', and for the first time used by state special services – recruitment and uniting of activities via social networks.

Associations of supporters of Russia on Facebook, VContact, Classmates and other popular social networks played an important role in mobilising civil 'crowd scenes' which created the necessary background and the 'picture' for legitimisation of the military invasion, and were also actively used for obtaining intelligence information about operations of the national government and the Ukrainian army.[44]

The analysis of the pro-Russian societies in the social networks showed, first, their outstanding efficiency as a mobilising instrument of the 'Russian spring' making it possible to synchronise operations of the Russian 'Fifth column' in different regions and bringing their supporters out onto the streets for the purpose of creating the required 'picture' even where the public leaders of the pro-Russian organisations were neutralised, as the regular members of the societies could be guided remotely, from a safe territory in Russia.

Organising such events through social networks does have some significant limitations – social networks are pretty efficient for organising mass propaganda events, and even street riots; however, they are far less instrumental for organising well-planned operations such as occupying buildings or attacks on army or law enforcement bodies. However, having in mind the important role that the timely shown images and the overall information background play in a 'hybrid' war, and also considering the possibility of synchronising the actions of the masses organised through social networks, which are coordinated from a single centre of operational planning, and smaller professional sabotage groups acting according to a plan, the role of pro-Russian network societies should not be underestimated. Monitoring the emergence of pro-Russian network groups on the Internet, and the messages communicated by such groups as a measure of predicting a 'hybrid' war, should be considered no less important than control over conventional public organisations.

AT THE OUTSET OF THE INVASION: 'WAR OF IMAGES'

In the previous section we reviewed the propaganda preparation for the invasion (the 'zero' phase of a 'hybrid' war), which may start long before the

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44   http://korrespondent.net/ukraine/politics/3396125-sbu-zanialas-terrorystamy-y-separatystamy-v-sotsse-tiakh; http://korrespondent.net/ukraine/3491856-sbu-zaderzhala-admynystratora-separatystskykh-hrupp-v-sotssetiakh; http://hvylya.net/news/sbu-obnaruzhila-v-sotssetyah-600-antiukrainskih-separatistskih-grupp-iz-rossii-i-kryima.html

actual military operation and last for a considerable period of time, and the groups of influence inside the country-victim of aggression that are utilised by Russia in the course of the intervention. It is appropriate now to review how Russia and its agents of influence act in the very first – the most important – stages of the invasion. The experience of Ukraine which, as it was a big country, was invaded by the Russian army in several parallel military-political operations in different regions, allows deriving a common algorithm of actions of the invaders and then further forecast the master plan of the actions of the RF irrespective of the local peculiarities.

The very first act of aggression is in no way the appearance of the regular army of the RF, or the disguised but nevertheless armed fighters – such a course of action would not allow the RF to imitate the 'fully internal nature of the conflict', but rather on the contrary, would qualify the country-victim of aggression to immediately receive international military assistance. The first acts of aggression are the imitation of 'peaceful acts of protest' organised and monitored, remotely to some extent directly from the RF, and partly by officers of the Russian special services, but primarily supported by the local pro-Russian 'mass movement'.

It should be borne in mind that as the operations described above are in fact part of a scenario developed and approved by the supreme leadership of the RF, such actions have to be fulfilled irrespective of the number of people actually supporting Russia in the country-victim of aggression. Without a doubt the presence of a large and well-prepared (by the propaganda) 'Fifth column' makes the invasion significantly easier. However, even though the 'Fifth column' is actually represented by small marginal groups and does actually receive mass support, this is still sufficient for the organisation and demonstration of an 'image' of mass unrest as long as such groups are sufficiently active.[45]

Further, it should be borne in mind that the imitation of mass unrest uses a number of different techniques – organised groups of participants of such unrest are brought to the country-victim of aggression from the border areas of Russia (disguised as 'tourist groups' or under the 'small border traffic' arrangement), or organised groups of unrest are transferred from different regions of the country-victim of aggression to the rally locations. Even with a small number of individuals tactics makes it possible to engage the activists in turn, to imitate a 'mass unrest' in different residential settlements of the country-victim of aggression, creating the impression of 'chaos throughout the country'.

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45 http://obozrevatel.com/crime/32047-blondinka-gastroler-s-aktsij-protesta-v-ukraine-priehala-v-moskvu-spasat-odessitov.htm; http://podrobnosti.ua/964905-na-juge-i-vostoke-ukrainy-dejstvujut-professionalnye-gastrolery-provokatory-avakov.html; http://www.segodnya.ua/regions/odessa/v-odesse-gastrolery-ustroili-postanovochnyy-miting-601824.html

Such actions essentially seek three principal objectives:

- imitation of 'chaos' and 'the uncontrolled situation' in the country-victim of aggression, and 'mass protests of the minorities against the policy of the governing regime';

- contribute and enhance confrontation between the indigenous and the non-indigenous population;

- provocation of the government of the country to repress these 'peaceful' protest actions.

And anything can serve as a pretext for such initiatives, as the time for the outset of such actions is determined not on the basis of any internal processes in the country-victim of aggression, but exceptionally by the readiness of Russia to start the aggression. As soon as a decision on the state of preparedness for the intervention is made, a pretext for 'mass protests' will be found immediately. As an example we can recall the mass unrest in Estonia, the formal trigger for which was the decision of the authorities to move the monument to Soviet soldiers to a different place.[46] It should be clearly understood that the policy of a 'peace offering' to openly pro-Russian groups, or any attempts to agree with them will never lead to any success, because it is not them who are taking decisions; they are only obedient executors of the Kremlin plan. Another area of activity is the ongoing awareness-raising work with citizens of non-indigenous nationality: such work is absolutely necessary, the rights and the non-discrimination of such groups have to be closely monitored. Due to the reasons discussed earlier this will not prevent the actions of the Kremlin-inspired pro-Russian groups, however, it may significantly reduce the number of participants and supporters of such groups; further it may also lead to the formation of anti-Kremlin patriotic groups in the non-indigenous population, which at the onset of the unrest will publicly declare their loyal position as opposed to the anti-government actions of the pro-Kremlin groups.

It should be clearly understood that the key objective of the first, expressly 'peaceful' actions, in which an important role will be played by the elderly, women and children, is to provoke 'repressions' on the part of the authorities. Later, following the invasion scenario such 'repressions' will be exaggerated by the Russian propaganda up to the level of 'mass bloodshed', and even presented as 'genocide of the Slavs'. This in turn will trigger, among the non-indigenous residents, a wave of artificially inflated fear of the 'Nazi massacre'. The proliferation of such attitudes of panic will simultaneously expand the social support base for the Russian invasion, mobilise the mass support of the Russian community for the future aggression and increase recruitment of

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46   http://www.gazeta.ru/news/seealso/1061991.shtml

volunteers. It will further complicate the international status of the country-victim of aggression by broadcasting 'the screams of the victims of the massacre for help' on the pro-Russian media in the West.

It is even more important to understand that should the government of the country fail to demonstrate sufficient determination to prevent the unrest at this earliest stage, it will never manage to avoid being accused of 'repressions', as such 'repressions' are an indispensable component of the occupation plan. Even if in reality none of the participants of the peaceful protest is even touched, the protest will be instantaneously radicalised according to a command from the Kremlin: some of the participants of the protest action from the organised pro-Russian groups will start attacking police officers on the streets, and police headquarters, smash shop windows, rob shops, burn cars, etc. Any forceful repressions against them, despite the expressly criminal nature of their actions, will be presented as an 'illegal repression', as planned in advance by the Kremlin, and all the hooligans will be presented in the media as 'peaceful protesters'.

Thus, irrespective of how peaceful-seeking the government and the law enforcement authorities are, the Russian agencies in the country-victim of aggression and the Russian media will announce the 'repressions' taking place in the country. It is important to remember this so that decisions can be taken in the very early stage of the unrest. As it is not possible to avoid accusations of 'repressions', it is much more prudent to attribute some realistic basis to them by neutralising, in the very first hours of the unrest, their leaders and other active participants, thus maintaining control over the situation and cleaning the streets of protesters. This is better than being unreasonably accused and thus losing time and allowing the unrest to develop into bigger and more organised forms.

Moreover, even if by some miracle the government managed to avoid the use of force, and at the same time maintain order on the streets, Russia nevertheless has a back-up move for such a case: imitation of an 'attack by neo-Nazis' on the 'peaceful demonstrators'. Let us not forget that in the case of a 'hybrid' war we are dealing with a political regime and professional special services, which in their country, for the purpose of accessing power and strengthening the regime, have on numerous occasions resorted to political assassinations of not only opposition leaders (Vladislav Listjev, Ana Politkovskaja, Boris Nemcov), but also, for the sake of provocation, killing tens of their own peaceful citizens (explosions of apartment houses in Volgograd and Riazan organised by the FSB of the RF that contributed to Putin's election as President of the RF in 1999). The murder of the ex-major FSB Aleksandr Litvinenko in London, and numerous other actually accomplished and prevented terrorist acts on the territory of Ukraine (Kiev, Kharkiv, Odessa, Dnipropetrovsk, Kherson, Zaporozhye, Lviv and Zakarpatye) clearly demonstrate the readiness of the Russian special services to exercise their terrorist methods far beyond the borders of the RF, and

primarily in the countries-victims of the Russian aggression. Thus the inactivity or the passivity of the government of the country-victim of aggression will be 'compensated': most likely agents of the RF will kill a pro-Russian activist (not some prominent leader, but most probably just an ordinary member of society, possibly an old man, veteran of the 'Great Patriotic War' a woman with a child), or an Orthodox church or a Russian school will be set on fire or painted in swastikas in the language of the indigenous nation, or a monument on the grave of a Soviet soldier will be destroyed, etc. – the versions of a 'Russian Gleiwitz' are nearly unlimited.

Such operations are practically impossible to avoid, as they are being conceived by a professional agency and do not arise directly from the internal logics of the developments in the country-victim of aggression. What can be done is to be politically prepared in as far as possible for such events, and to make statements, without delay, condemning the terrorists, explaining the provocative nature of such actions and denying the involvement in such actions of the authorities of the country or local patriotic organisations. However, such explanations will be accepted only by a certain thinking part of society, while the supporters of the 'Russian world' idea will nevertheless accept the official version of developments and will be horrified by the 'Nazi terror'. It is important to ensure that the explanations regarding the provocative nature of such actions appear first in the English-speaking mass media rather than the Russian version, as this has a serious effect on the diplomatic position of the country-victim of aggression.

Should the 'back-up' version described earlier have to be used, the image communicated by the Russian media will be slightly modified. Instead of a focus on the 'repressing regime' the main message now is 'local Nazis are killing the Slavs, while the authorities are neither willing nor capable to confront them. In the case of the Baltic States which are recognised members of the global community of democratic states, the exploitation of such tactics – accusing the national government of not committing repressions, but rather of encouraging ultra-right extremists, 'impotence in the face of rampaging Nazi groups', and 'loss of control over the situation in the country' is even more probable than a direct accusation of 'Nazism' or 'outrage against the non-indigenous population'.

Irrespective of how the focuses are actually placed – where there is an imitation of 'mass repressions by the regime' or 'rampages by uncontrolled Nazi bands' (or, as in case of Ukraine, both messages were communicated simultaneously in different combinations), the result of this stage of the invasion is finally the dissemination of a wave of fear and panic among the Russian-speaking population, and at the same time creation of a 'picture' of chaos and mass unrest in the country-victim of aggression. This is essentially the condition for shifting to the next phase of the plan of invasion – the imitation of 'national resistance to Nazism'.

FROM 'WAR OF PICTURES' TO 'THE RUSSIAN SELF-DEFENCE': KEY RISKS AT THE INITIAL STAGES OF THE ARMED INVASION

At this stage, which starts shortly after the official declaration of 'repressions' and 'chaos', regular units of the armed forces and special services of the RF appear on stage for the first time; they are completely camouflaged as members of 'self-defence units of the local Russian-speaking population'.

At this stage the local pro-Russian activists formally declare that they are loyal to the Constitution and respect the laws of the country-victim of aggression, but they are 'forced' to form local self-defence units, as the government is not willing or capable of defending the local minorities from the Nazi terror.

At this stage local activists will actually form self-defence detachments from the criminal elements, members of the earlier pro-Russian national socialist underground movement, members of military-sport clubs and clubs of 'patriotic education', or simply local pro-Russian persons frightened by the 'threat of Nazism'. Nevertheless, all such units and detachments are assigned only an auxiliary role at that stage in the context of the aggression, as the leadership of the RF does not have illusions concerning the reliability or the military training of such troops. The actual 'self-defence' units formed from among the local 'Fifth column' act mainly as the 'crowd scene' and the 'picture' for mass media, and finally, as guides with knowledge of the location. All the most significant military tasks at this stage are fulfilled by the regular special detachments of the GRU and FSB of the RF which, after the occupation of the Crimea, were called 'little green men' in the mass media, and in the mythology of the 'Russian world' they are referred to as heroes, PAM – 'polite armed men'. Therefore, it would be wrong to deceive yourself about the inefficiency of the local Russian fighters, as in reality at that stage the national army and police are confronted directly by the RF, in addition, represented by the most professional units which are trained much better than the average armed forces of Russia.

From the legal viewpoint, in most democratic states the use of the army in internal conflicts is prohibited, while the suppression of armed extremists and terrorists is assigned to the competence of the police. Since at this stage the pro-Russian paramilitary formations are camouflaged as the 'local self-defence', a natural response of the national government is to use the police against them. Such a decision, which derives from the logics of European states operating under the rule of law, appears to be erroneous, because it is based on a wrong assumption: it does not take into account the presence of the professional detachments of the FSB and the GRU RF within the allegedly 'local'

paramilitary formations, actually from the first moments of their appearance. Ukraine committed such a fatal mistake, when for a considerable time it tried to use only its police forces. As could be expected in an armed confrontation with professional detachments of armed forces of the RF the police proved to be inadequately prepared and armed. As a result, Ukraine was forced to recognise the internal nature of the war and to start using its army to confront the aggressor. But valuable time had already been lost as the conflict had already evolved into a widespread military operation.

Having in mind the participation of the camouflaged units of the Russian special services within the alleged 'paramilitary' detachments, at the very first indications of proclamations of 'self-defence', 'people's militia troops', 'militia', it is important to start acting according to the plan for confronting external military aggression. It is important to start to immediately disarm and neutralise the use of such paramilitary formation, using in particular the army, rather than just the police.

Certainly, in this situation the army and the police must act in a coordinated manner. The army is then assigned to mount attacks on the occupied buildings, and to defeat and disarm the enemy with weapons. The police meanwhile is responsible for ensuring the army's access to the occupied buildings through the 'human shield' of the civil population, preventing unarmed unrest on the streets, detaining rioters and other suspects and officially recording the arrest of persons detained by the army in relation to the suppression of armed resistance.

The moment of creating paramilitary troops is one of the **decisive and tipping moments.** In addition, every possible measure has to be taken to prevent the formation of 'self-defence' or 'people's militia' groups. As the experience of Ukraine shows, if such paramilitary troops, disguised as regular forces of the RF, exist for even just a few days, further escalation of the conflict and transition to full-scale war stage becomes practically irreversible.

The fact is that any public legitimisation of even the smallest formations from the local Russian-speaking population, but which creates a 'picture' for the mass media significantly strengthens the position of the RF in its principal objective to imitate a 'civil conflict' inside the country. In addition, it weakens the international support to the country-victim of aggression, and makes it possible to deploy unlimited numbers of volunteers and regular military formations from Russia – operations disguised under the civil activity of such small formations in the country-victim of aggression. However, should the pro-Russian paramilitary formations, and at this stage still small groups of special services of the GRU and the FSB be confronted with an attack immediately and be physically neutralised by the national army in the very first hours, this would

disrupt the scenario of a 'hybrid' war. The RF would be placed in a position where it has to choose whether to refuse to direct a military invasion and limit itself to diplomatic and economic pressure, or start a military invasion without camouflaging it as a 'civil war'. This would allow the country-victim of aggression to immediately receive international military assistance.

Should the formation of 'self-defence' not be interrupted and curtailed at this very first stage, the further scenario of the 'hybrid' war requires that the invaders simultaneously implement two actions:

- **legitimisation of the local 'Fifth column" under the pretence of 'local self-governance',** the key element of which is the proclamation of illegal 'bodies of governance' – local 'people's mayors', 'autonomous Republics', etc.;

- **imitation of training of government forces for the violent suppression of peaceful protests and repression of 'self-governance',** which allows the local leaders of the 'Fifth column' (already in the role of 'self-governance) to publicly use the army against the peaceful population';

Legitimisation of the illegal 'authorities', as a rule, requires them to be officially declared as 'temporary' at mass public events (on public squares, or in public buildings occupied by pro-Russian activists), and a promise to shortly arrange 'elections'.

It should be recalled that there are two equally probable scenarios of the described phase of a 'hybrid' war – either, as was described earlier, the first step is the organisation of 'self-defence' which later serves as a protection to declare 'bodies of self-governance', or, inversely, 'bodies of self-governance' are declared already in the course of the 'peaceful actions', then volunteers are recruited on their behalf to 'self-defence'. It should be borne in mind that both actions – formation of the 'self-defence' and declaration of 'self-governance' – are an integral part of a single plan, closely correlated in time, while their sequence in relation to each other is only a technical issue. Thus, the appearance of 'peaceful self-governance' should not be perceived as a refusal by the enemy to engage in an armed invasion – this is simply one of the versions of the scenario designed to mislead the government of the country-victim of aggression in order to win time for a redeployment of special forces, and place it in a diplomatically inconvenient position thus provoking it to disperse or arrest the 'peaceful self-governance'. Such 'peaceful self-governance' must be neutralised, by way of arrest or dissolution, and should the national law enforcement bodies manage to do this prior to the formation of the 'self-defence', this will only reduce the overall number of casualties of the aggression, including those from the Russian-speaking population, thus this should be undertaken irrespective of the probable eternal political demarches of Russia.

At this moment of '**proclamation of self-governance**' the situation becomes extremely threatening for the national government. However, it is still not hopeless, and a 'point of no return' between the military-police anti-terrorist operation and full-scale war has not yet been reached.

The key moment and the 'point of no return' is the next stage – **the stage of occupation of public buildings**. This stage is an indispensable part of the 'hybrid' war plan, as the occupation of public buildings by 'self-defence' forces and their control by pro-Russian 'self-governance' facilitates Russia in achieving several tactical objectives, all at the same time.

First of all, the puppet Russian 'self-governance' bodies are legitimised by demonstrating de facto control of the situation in the respective towns. This is a typical substitution of concepts: control over several buildings is successfully presented as control over the entire settlement, or even control over the entire territory administratively subordinate to the settlement.

This substitution of concepts logically gives rise to the following two conclusions which are false, however, easily perceived by the collective consciousness:

- powerlessness of the national government and absence of government control over significant territories;

- collective support to the 'local self-governance' in the territories, in which the administrative buildings have been occupied and are being retained.

Special consideration should be given to the second conclusion, as the idea that 'mass support' for pro-Russian actions is necessary, is not infrequently implicitly present in any considerations about a 'hybrid' war. This in addition involves making two typical mistakes: the mass support is considered a prerequisite for the outset of a 'Russian spring' type action; at the same time the success of Russian units in seizing control of a building, or even a settlement is seen as evidence of mass support for Russia in the relevant settlement.

This logic would be substantiated were this a genuine internal conflict caused by local causes and developing according to the laws of civil conflicts. In the meantime it should be borne in mind that we are actually dealing with a military operation which is well-planned from the outside and implemented according to a scenario involving the participation of not only local, but first of all invasive powers and means rather than occurring 'spontaneously'. As a result, collective support from the local population is not an indispensable condition for the organisation of mass unrest and demonstration of chaos as described earlier. Even less support is required for the occupation of buildings and declaration of 'self-governance'.

The conditions which are necessary to camouflage the Russian invasion as an internal conflict are the following:

- the presence of a small but dedicated and active local pro-Russian group for the imitation of the local 'mass scene';

- the presence of the plan and the scenario developed in the RF, and the advance arrival of a small number of experienced and well-trained 'directors' of similar events (typically, officers of the FSB or the GRU, and sometimes also professional political activists from the Russian nationalistic organisations);

- the possibility of prompt delivery of mobile groups of activists for the mass scenes and camouflaged groups of special forces of the armed forces of the RF, and the possibility to promptly transfer groups of local activists and those from the RF between neighbouring residential settlements;

- passivity or disorientation of the majority of the local population who might in fact not be supportive of the Russian invasion, but due to the lack of organisation and psychological training expecting actions only from the national government and police, however, not prepared to organise the resistance to the aggression independently.

Provided the conditions described above are met, the stage of the Russian invasion described in this stage may be realised by very small (depending on the population in a specific settlement – from a few to several hundred individuals) Russian invasion forces supported by several hundred or several thousand pro-Russian people (including the elderly, women and children).

The first facilities to be occupied are the mayor's offices, police headquarters and the local television and radio stations. The control over such buildings makes it possible to cut off the local population from the national television and radio broadcasting (in the case of the Russian invasion of Donbass this was one of the first actions the occupants undertook and proved to be efficient), imitate control over the territory by the self-proclaimed 'self-governance' and imitate the transfer of one of the most important political functions to the hands of the 'self-defence' – maintaining the rule of law in the settlement.

Occupation of police headquarters, as a rule, also allows some trophy guns to be obtained, which is not that important per se (groups of special forces from the RF arrive with their arms, and, as a rule, they provide some illegal armament to local fighters), but much more important as a means for legalising the further supply of arms from the RF. No matter how many guns are brought into the country, they will be presented as recovered from the 'local police' (as we will see later, the same role is given to the armoury seized at army warehouses).

Should the building occupation operation not be completed, a situation develops which is specifically inconvenient for the national government. The national government then faces a tough choice, which by default has no good option, and it has to choose between two bad options.

Should force have to be used to liberate the occupied buildings, another 'image' justifying the Russian military invasion is created – 'government forces are cruelly suppressing the fight of the peaceful population for self-governance'.

Such an 'image' becomes even more convincing, as the occupied administrative buildings are immediately surrounded by a 'human shield' from the pro-Russian unarmed populations, including the elderly, women and children. Right behind the backs of the 'peaceful' protesters inside the buildings, hidden from the TV cameras are groups of the regular forces of the RF, and armed paramilitary Russian forces,[47] however externally, in front of the cameras, there is only the Russian-speaking civil population – an innocent victim of the government punishers'.

It is specifically this 'peaceful population' within the framework of the Russian invasion that is assigned the role of 'ritual victim' of the government forces and the police, and at the same time those 'asking for assistance'. When the buildings of the Ukrainian police and the security service in Donetsk and Lugansk were occupied by troops of the GRU of the RF, and well-armed fighters of the paramilitary Russian formation 'Oplot', the demonstrators in front of the buildings consisted mostly of old men and women, pensioners, and it was they that were holding slogans and calling out in front of the TV cameras 'Putin, bring in the troops! Russia, save us from the fascists!'

The national government in that situation is naturally tempted to postpone the use of any force and tries to avoid fatalities while entering into peaceful negotiations with the occupants. And this was the tragic mistake that the authorities of Ukraine made.

It is important to remember that there is no party to conduct negotiations with – the occupants of the buildings and square rally participants do not have any authority to agree concerning anything or take any independent solutions. Irrespective of whether any of them understand their subordinate role (officers of the special forces of the RF, and the 'directors' arriving from Russia who have received orders from Moscow and are following them religiously), or consider themselves to be independent persons (the majority of those who are used for the local 'mass scene') – they are all no more than actors in one big performance directed by the Russian invasion. All political decisions are taken in Moscow,

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47   http://www.unian.net/politics/905412-u-harkovskih-separatistov-izyyali-6-yaschikov-s-kokteylyami-molo-tova-i-boevoe-orujie.html

even more so – directly by the supreme military leadership of the RF, and any agreements on the 'lower levels' are bound to fail, a priori, as they would be infringed by the executors of orders from Moscow.

The government may also be overtaken by a very dangerous illusion that the Russian invasion is directly dependent on the behaviour of the national authorities, i.e. 'should Russia be given no pretext', not to use any force against the occupants, then the RF will not be able to bring in their troops. It is vitally important to remember that peaceful negotiations with the occupants of the buildings will not help to avoid military aggression, on the contrary, it will only accelerate it. The fact is that should the government fail to take decisive physical measures in the very immediate hours after the occupation of the buildings, Plan B according to the invasion scenario is launched: legitimisation of the so-called 'self-governance' and then the invasion of the Russian forces according to a request of the allegedly recognised local 'self-governance'.

The more the national authorities demonstrate their peacefulness, the more the terrorists delay the negotiation process according to orders of the Russian military leadership. Time is thus beneficial for Russia – both the local population, and Russian society and the international community start developing the impression that 'self-governance' and 'self-defence' units are actually in full control of the territories, the control that they are publicly declaring (although in reality, initially they control a maximum of only a few administrative buildings, and the squares in front of them), and, accordingly, that the 'self-governance' is actually supported by the majority of the local population, as opposed to the 'unpopular' national government that had actually completely 'lost all control'.

It should be clearly understood that despite any written norms of international law, in reality, the perception of the 'legitimisation through the control of the territory de facto', and about whether or not the legitimate authorities of the country exercise actual, rather than 'paper' control over the relevant territories, to a large extent determines the reaction of the international community and even affects domestic public opinion. Therefore, the longer the self-proclaimed 'local self-governance' maintains control over the occupied buildings, and the longer the government attempts to enter into negotiations with them, the more the occupational 'self-governance' strengthens its position and legitimises itself, while the positions of the national authorities are meantime weakening.

In the meantime, the Russian mass media continue communicating 'images' of the 'nation scale resistance to the regime' and 'the heroic defence' of the occupied buildings, although in reality nobody was actually even threatening them. This psychologically prepares, in the first place, the Russian community and its 'Fifth column' in the country-victim of aggression for the next stage of the occupation – the full-scale military invasion by the RF.

From the tactical viewpoint any delay in the negotiations that are, a priori, bound to fail, is used by the Russian invaders to tackle four tasks:

- recruitment of volunteers from the local population for paramilitary formations;

- reorganisation of such paramilitary troops from different bands into more or less battle-worthy units, and training of the new recruits led by professional Russian military instructors;

- concealed transfer of additional units of the regular military forces and paramilitary organisations from the RF, and the provision of the local paramilitary formations with arms;

- identification by the forces of the local pro-Russian activists and the physical elimination by the forces of the RF of local patriotic activists able to lead the national resistance movement in the region.[48]

And finally, following the delay by the government to exercise force from one day to two-three weeks, the developments enter the final stage of the legalisation of the local 'self-governance' – the stage of 'expressing the popular will' by way of mock performance of a 'referendum on the autonomy or independence' of the occupied region, and the holding of 'free elections' of the local authorities.

It should be remembered at this point, as the experience of the Crimea and Donbass unambiguously demonstrated, that for the purpose of imitating the expression of 'people's will', and thus the ultimate legitimisation of the invasion, support of the majority of the population of the occupied region is not a prerequisite condition. According to sociological data only a small majority (about 55 %) supported the Russian invasion in the territory of Sevastopol city; even on the territory of the Crimean peninsula support for the Russian occupation accounted for no more than 41 %,[49] and even less so in Donbass, initially only 20 % of the population.[50] However, this proved sufficient for the imitation of 'referenda; and 'elections', as according to the scenario of intervention the only necessary 'image' is a TV image showing people lining up at election booths. The result of voting is interpreted according to instructions

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48   http://www.unian.net/politics/911238-sbu-k-ubiystvu-deputata-ryibaka-prichastna-gruppa-strelka.html; http://www.unian.net/society/911793-student-telo-kotorogo-nashli-v-reke-na-donetchine-uchilsya-v-kpi-rek-tor.html

49   http://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=236&page=1;   http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/2013%20October%207%20Survey%20of%20Crimean%20Public%20Opinion,%20May%2016-30,%202013.pdf; http://www.km.ru/world/2012/09/14/polozhenie-russkoyazychnogo-naseleniya-ukrainy/692296-rossiya -terya-et-krym] [http://nbnews.com.ua/ru/news/115223/; http://argumentua.com/novosti/vpervye-bolshinstvo-krym-chan-khotyat-videt-krym-v-sostave-ukrainy

50   http://www.ostro.org/general/politics/news/442124/

prepared in advance by Moscow.[51]

An interesting example of a 'conflict of mentalities' between the Russians 'damaged' by democracy from national independent states, and those from the metropolis, is presented by the telephone conversation of the leaders between the so-called DPR, and their Moscow supervisor on the day of the so-called 'elections of the government of the DPR' intercepted by the security services of Ukraine: accustomed to the free elections in Ukraine the leaders of the DPR were complaining to their Moscow masters that they had not managed to secure sufficient support from the electors; the Russian master was sincerely surprised at the very question, and clearly explained to the 'slow-witted' leaders of the DPR that in fact nobody was interested in the actual results – they simply had to announce the required number, even without counting the votes.[52]

Should the national authorities nevertheless allow legitimisation of the 'self-governance' through the imitation of the expression of the 'people's will', their position becomes extremely difficult, and a full-scale war is practically inevitable. Made legitimate by 'referenda' and 'elections' the local occupation authorities will take an even more irreconcilable position in any negotiations, will be demanding that the national government recognise them to be a party of the negotiations equal to the national government, that is in fact, recognition of the separation of the occupied territories.

At the same time, they will be applying to the international community with a request to be diplomatically recognised, and to Russia with a request to be recognised, and at the same time providing military assistance. As of that moment the Russian military presence may at any moment shift from the phase of small professional special troops, to the invasion phase with the necessary numbers of troops, including large military troops – they will all be positioning themselves as the 'army' of the newly formed 'authorities', and if they have to reveal their true identity, they will be presented as a 'peacekeeping contingent', which entered the country at the request of the local occupation authorities 'elected by popular vote'.

As it has been shown by the experience of Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine, following the stage of 'legitimisation by way of a referendum and elections', the only remaining possible way out for the national government is full-scale war with the armed forces of the Russian Federation, in addition to its international standing complicated by the 'ambiguity' of its domestic situation.

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51   Матвейчев О., Беляков А. Крымская весна: 30 дней, которые потрясли мир. – Изд.„Книжный мир", 2014
г.; Холмогоров Е. С. Карать карателей. Хроники Русской весны. – Изд.„Книжный мир", 2015 г.
52   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1xeCWGxGVUk

An additional negative consequence of entering into negotiations with the occupants of the buildings, and even more so protracting the negotiation process to the phase of the expression of the 'people's will' is the 'domino effect': proliferation of the invasion to other regions and, potentially, to the entire territory of the country. The impunity of the occupants and the 'weakness' clearly demonstrated by the government (here any peaceful attempts of the national government will be presented by the Russian propaganda as 'weakness', 'irresolution', 'loss of control' and 'impotence') will foster the moral elevation of the supporters of the Russian aggression in the towns that have not been occupied, giving them time for self-organisation and to receive instructions from Russia, and at the same time demoralise the patriots.

In addition to the moral-psychological effect, from the tactical viewpoint the negotiations open the possibility, to shift control over buildings and towns where the occupants have already strengthened their positions to the newly formed paramilitary units and the forces arriving from Russia, thus releasing the most professional troops of the RF (which are not yet so numerous), and transferring them, according to the plan, to occupy buildings in the next town. In this way, the invasion will be expanding from cities with initially the largest number of pro-Russian citizens and activists and the places easiest to reach for invaders from the territory of the RF to more remote towns with less pro-Russian populations. This was how the scenario developed in Donbass – initially occupying the administrative buildings in the towns bordering with the RF. After the 'authorities' of the pro-Russian activists strengthened their positions and some support arrived from the RF, the professional special forces and troops of experienced paramilitary formations were released and moved further westwards until they met the armed resistance of the national army. This expansion of the intervention was strictly confined to the regions where from the very beginning no strict military or police measures were taken, they did not progress beyond the line of the start of the Ukrainian military operation – the invaders immediately launched defensive operations in the earlier occupied regions.

Particularly noteworthy is the extremely negative role that the 'moderate' pro-Russian politicians and businessmen played in Ukraine and can possibly play in the Baltic States by offering their assistance to the national government as 'neutral' intermediaries in the negotiations between the national government and the pro-Russian 'self-governance'. Such politicians (in Ukraine the most prominent example of such politicians was the billionaire from Donetsk, Achmetov who, over the course of two months, with the main intention of protecting his business empire, tried to act as an intermediary to have a 'political dialogue' between the DPR-LPR and Kiev. The negotiations failed, as at the decisive moment Moscow issued an order to its puppets to terminate the negotiations with the DPR-LPR. Achmetov lost most of his factories, while

Ukraine lost time which made full-scale war inevitable). Such intermediaries will claim that they 'better know the needs of the minorities and the population of the rebellious regions', 'have authority among the population of the rebellious regions' and 'by their own authority will suppress the radical forces should the government refrain from exercising force'. In reality, even if their efforts were sincere (which is not always the case), and their authority were significant – they still do not have the capacities or instruments to restrain the 'radicals' from violence, because the actual forces acting instead of the 'radicals' are the troops of the FSB and GRU of the FR under direct orders from Moscow. For that reason, they will never manage to reach a 'compromise' between the government and the 'self-governance', because the conflict in fact is not an internal conflict, and the 'self-governance' does not have a real mandate to achieve any agreement. However, their 'intermediation' is capable of significantly affecting the determination of the government to immediately use force against the aggressors, and significantly increases the threat of involving the government in a protracted imitation of negotiations, which provides the aggressors with the time necessary to strengthen their political position, expand the occupied territory and redeploy their military reserves; thus a full-scale war becomes certainly inevitable.

Thus, in view of all the threats and the apparent undesirability and unpopularity of brute force, it is the use of such force in the very early stages of the invasion which will eventually help to minimise the number of casualties and avoid full-scale war, while delaying the use of such measures leads to full-scale military conflict. Later, I will illustrate this thesis, which at first sight is not apparent, by an example from different regions of Ukraine, where Russia used the same scenario in developing a 'hybrid' war, but where in view of the different circumstances the actions on the part of the Ukrainians differed.

CASE STUDY: HOW DID PUTIN WIN IN THE CRIMEA, PARTLY WIN IN DONBASS AND LOSE IN ODESSA AND KHARKOV?

The Crimea. The Ukrainian authorities were not courageous enough to exercise force and limited themselves to an appeal for international diplomatic support, and the Ukrainian army on the territory of the peninsula never received an order to exercise force. As a result, the peninsula was fully occupied, the following developments included imitation of the 'referendum on the independence and accession to Russia', including the Crimea in the composition of the RF, also seizure by Russia of a considerable number of weapons and ammunition that was further transferred to pro-Russian fighters for military actions in Donbass.

Donbass (Donetsk industrial agglomeration). Significant time was lost in attempts to launch peaceful negotiations with pro-Russian terrorists who have occupied administrative buildings in Donetsk and Lugansk. The consequence was strengthening of the DPR and the LPR, 'crawling occupation' of the towns further westwards in the Ukrainian territory, legitimisation of the DPR and the LPR by way of imitation of the 'referendum' and 'elections'. The result was a full-scale war lasting more than a year with the participation of the Ukrainian army, the regular army of the RF, and a number of different paramilitary formations. According to some sources, casualties reached 50,000 on both sides, and the end of the conflict is unlikely for the foreseeable future.

Mariupol (Donetsk region). On 13 June 2014, Ukrainian volunteers from the paramilitary patriotic formations (battalion 'Azov', now – a regiment within the National Guard of Ukraine, at the time of the events described in the present paper were not yet legalised, also with the involvement of the officers of the Ukrainian Security Service) retook the Mayor's office and the police headquarters having pushed out the terrorists from the city and arranged patrolling on the city streets. Two people were killed,[53] after which the city remained under Ukrainian control and peaceful up to the beginning of shelling by Russian rocket artillery in January 2015. Currently the moods in the city are predominantly pro-Ukrainian as evidenced by the active assistance given by the local civilian population to the military in organising the defence of the town against the attacks of Russian forces.

Odessa. An attempted armed coup, as well as the occupation of the regional administration undertaken by the local pro-Russian activists and other Russian combat units transferred from Transdniestria, was disrupted by the local patriotic civil population in the course of the street barricade fights on 2 May 2014. 48 persons were killed in the clashes (mostly pro-Russian terrorists who perished during the fire in the building occupied by them).[54] Since then the border with Transdniestria has been under control of the Ukrainian army and Odessa remains a peaceful Ukrainian town. The activities of the Russian underground and the redeployed sabotage groups are limited to organising explosions mostly disrupted by anti-terrorist police units and the security services.

Kharkov. An attempted coup – occupation of the Mayor's office and the regional administration by fighters of the Russian paramilitary organisation 'Oplot' and the 'mass crowd' brought from Belgorod region of the RF was disrupted on

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53   http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2014/06/ukrainian-troops-regain-port-city-mariu-pol-201461393754228959.html; http://obozrevatel.com/politics/87423-poyavilis-pervyie-foto-mariupolya-pos-le-ato.htm

54   http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2014/06/21/7029726/;http://korrespondent.net/ukraine/politics/3357581-kolychestvo-pohybshykh-v-odesse-dostyhlo-42-raneny-125-chelovek-mvd

8 April 2014 by forceful actions of the forces of internal affairs: the occupied building was attacked using special measures. About 10 persons were killed (almost all of them were Ukrainian civil activists who attempted to prevent the coup pending the arrival of police troops and killed by Russian fighters; no casualties were recorded during the attack itself, only injuries), more than 600 fighters were arrested. The demonstration of the detained fighters-citizens of the RF helped to mobilise the local population in support of the national government. Until now Kharkov remains under the control of the national government. Russian terrorist underground and the sabotage groups remain very active, they regularly organise explosions, however, due to Ukrainian control of the border with the RF, the terrorists are not capable of organising mass pro-Russian demonstrations in the town.

'The government of the "Kharkov People's Republic"' was formed in Moscow, however, without having actual control over the territory and without it being legitimised by the 'people's will' the government remains inactive, and does not play any role even remotely similar to the role of the 'governments of the DPR or the LPR'.[55]

Dnipropetrovsk, Nikolayiv, Kherson, Zaporozhye. As a response to the occupation of the buildings in Donbass and the attempted coup in Odessa, the local patriotic population organised self-defence troops and independently curtailed the pro-Russian demonstrations at a very early stage – the stage of 'peaceful' protest actions transforming into street unrest. In the course of street fights Ukrainian activists even without using any firearms dispersed the pro-Russian rallies, demolished their camps, which used to be the centres of pro-Russian activities, and at the most critical moments organised 'human shields' around the local administrative buildings. There were no casualties; all the towns and the same-name regions under their administration are fully controlled by the national government and are one of the main centres of resistance to the Russian military aggression.[56]

Northern regions of the Lugansk region (Starobelsk, Novoaydar, Svatovo). In the very early stages of the 'big war' in Donbass in May 2014, local Ukrainian self-defence troops were organised in the regions and in cooperation with the volunteer battalion 'Aidar' organised the protection of polling stations during the Ukrainian presidential election on 25 May 2014. While protecting the polling stations the troops entered into an armed confrontation with the 'Don Cossacks' from Russia, disarmed them, and finally carried out mass arrests

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55   http://www.bbc.com/russian/international/2015/04/150407_kharkiv_peoples_republic

56   http://www.unian.net/politics/905183-v-nikolaeve-maydan-razognal-separatistov-i-razobral-ih-pala-tochnyiy-lager.html#ad-image-0]   [http://www.unian.net/politics/905319-v-nikolaeve-zaderjan-23-uchastnika-stolknoveniy-15-chelovek-postradali.html; http://nikvesti.com/news/politics/58206; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bk8YUxP6qkY

of pro-Russian activists in the regions. Two persons were killed during the incidents;, unlike the remaining part of the Lugansk region which is one of the main theatres of military operations in the war between Ukraine and the RF, the Northern areas up until now have lived a relatively peaceful life (except that it is in the vicinity of the front line) and are controlled by the national government.[57]

IS IT POSSIBLE TO AVOID A 'HYBRID' WAR?

Should the author consider that the answer to the question asked in the title of this section is negative, writing the present paper would be meaningless. In my opinion, the experience of Ukraine, to an equal extent both negative and positive, shows that where it is impossible to avoid an attack from the RF, it is possible to prevent the 'hybrid' war at its very early stage and avert its transition to the phase of a full-scale military conflict. To achieve that, first and foremost a number of preventive measures have to be taken by the national government and the civil society before the beginning of the direct invasion. In addition, decisive actions are required in the very first hours and days of the intervention. The enemy has considerable resources at its disposal and well-tested methods of aggression, therefore neither the army, special services, politicians, the mass-media nor the civil society can defeat it individually. However, acting together and in close association such forces are sufficient for reversing the aggression.

First and foremost, the propaganda war preceding the intervention should be taken most seriously. No messages of Russian propaganda, even those that seem absurd at first sight, should be ignored (even ones such as 'ritual killings of new-borns') – there will always be a percentage of people ready to believe in any disinformation coming from their 'own' sources, and as we have seen in previous sections, the success of a 'Russian spring' project does not necessarily require mass support – an active dedicated minority is sufficient.

It is necessary to diligently monitor all the information related to own country communicated by Russian and pro-Russian media, and to look at it from three directions:

- formation of the image of the country in the Russian community;

- the information communicated to the country-potential victim of aggression;

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57   http://joinfo.ua/politic/914897_Situatsiya-Luganske-vlasti-samooborona-Svatovo.html;   http://korrespon-dent.net/ukraine/politics/3368553-v-novoaidare-luhanskoi-oblasty-stolknovenyia-est-zhertvy-mvd

- information about the country-victim of aggression broadcast to the media sphere of western countries (predominantly, on English-speaking, German-speaking and other programmes broadcast to Russian audiences in foreign languages).

No commentaries or communications, no matter how absurd, should be left unrefuted or not commented on – they should be officially, on a regular basis disavowed on behalf of the government and (which is much more important), on behalf of the authorities by intellectuals and the civil society both before the Russian-speaking audience in the country-victim of aggression, and before western societies. In addition, in relation to each denial of the disinformation, it is important to draw the attention of the audience to the fact that the disinformation is not an 'accidental mistake by the journalist', but is rather part of a well-prepared plan of Putin's RF, which is an 'information overture' to a potential invasion of the country.

In general, efforts should be made to ensure that the information reflecting the actual situation in the country-victim of aggression is regularly communicated in the two information domains, which the national media most often forget: in the Russian-speaking media domain targeting the local Russian-speaking minority, and the English-speaking international information space.

In the first case it is important to create an actual valid alternative, for the Russian-speaking audience in the country-potential victim of aggression enabling them to receive information in the Russian language, but which however reflects the viewpoint of the national government and the patriotic part of the society. A considerable part of the Russian-speaking population in principle does not accept such sources of information, which they consider 'alien' in advance (we have earlier considered this peculiarity of conscience of the 'Russian world' people); however, the part that maintained critical thinking can be pulled out from the informational influence of the Kremlin by providing a healthy information alternative in their native language. Not much reliance should be given to the Russian-speaking media operating in our countries today – as a rule many of them are 'local' only in name, in fact, they are financed from the RF and operate as part of the propaganda machine of the Kremlin. Care must be taken to ensure that the national mass media, which were earlier operating in the national language are only now available in Russian also (at least online).

It is no less important to continuously monitor the communications about own country in the English-speaking media domain, and ensure regular provision of objective and positive information about the country, and the different aspects of its life in the international mass media. Maintaining regular reminders about the country in a positive context is a necessary information

background that ensures the success of the second part of the English-speaking messages – regular rebutting of disinformation about the country thrown into the media space by the Russian propaganda. The Ukraine case showed that an information defeat in the western media domain comes at a very high cost, as it significantly restricts international support and assistance to the country-victim of aggression.

A critical area of activities designed to prevent aggression is the undermining of the social base of the intervention by constantly working with the ethnic minorities. It is absolutely necessary to deprive the Kremlin of its 'monopoly' in representing and 'protecting' the interests of minorities, and to facilitate the process of new structures and communities of minorities that are loyal to the independent states evolving and hold adverse views towards Russian imperialism.

First of all, it is important to shift away from the contraposition artificially imposed by Russia of the 'title' nation vs 'all minorities', and prevent the Russian community from speaking on behalf of the entire indigenous population. In particular, it is important to support the public activities of different communities and their unions of other nations of the former USSR, who due to their historical past are anti-Soviet and anti-imperial minded, in order to prevent the involvement of such minorities in associations set up by pro-Russian groups and based on 'nostalgia for the golden age of the USSR'.

It is extremely important to fracture the 'unity of the Slavs' so artificially built up by the Russian propaganda, by stimulating the development of Ukrainian and Belorussian communities as clearly delineated from the so-called 'Russian-speaking' communities, i.e. localise the influence of the Russian community limiting it to ethnic Russians only, and preventing them from representing all 'Russian-speaking people of a country (i.e. in fact, non-indigenous population).

Organisation of different media-events, round tables, etc., with the representation of numerous ethnic groups voicing views different from that of the Russians, and unequivocally identifying themselves as independent post-Soviet states can considerably complicate the work of the Russian propaganda machine and narrow the social base of the support for the intervention. Thus, in Ukraine a significant role in the resistance to the 'Russian spring' was played by the clear patriotic position taken by the leaders of the Jewish community (during the critical days of the beginning of the 'Russian spring' one of the leaders of the Ukrainian Jewish community Igor Kolomoyski was speaking at press-conferences wearing a tailored T-shirt with the logo 'I – a Jewish Bandera!'[58]) and the leaders of the Muslim ethnic minorities, particularly the Crimean Tatars, Azerbaijanis and Caucasians.

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58   http://www.mk.ru/politics/2014/12/18/otkuda-poshli-zhidobanderovcy.html

One particularly important task is to work with the Russian ethnic community on an on-going basis and to identify small groups therein who are undoubtedly citizens with democratic views, i.e. 'non-Kremlin Russians'. Such groups should be provided with access to the media for their public statements, and assisted in building civil society. Their position vis-à-vis the Kremlin should be publicised. Even if such groups do not succeed in attracting (i.e. to the idea of the independent national state) most of the local Russian-speaking community (which, in principle, is quite possible), as a minimum, they can play a key role in repudiating the Kremlin's propaganda regarding the 'Nazi persecution of the minorities', which is extremely important in the context of seeking international assistance.

While communicating with ethnic minorities or in the media space in the languages of the indigenous population special attention should be dedicated to an on-going explanation of certain simple facts which generally seem understandable and obvious to the patriotic community, but which, however, are not evident or alien to people under the influence of Russian propaganda. First and foremost, the complete absence of any fundamental human and civil rights and freedoms in the RF that are routine for all those residing in independent states irrespective of their ethnic origin must be constantly highlighted. The possibility to exercise such rights and freedoms (freedom of movement, freedom of thought and its public expression, freedom to peaceful assembly and associations, etc.) has become so commonplace in independent states including their Russian-speaking population, that they have no doubt whatsoever that even if they come under the protection of the RF all such rights and freedoms will be preserved, as they are not able to imagine a society without them. It is necessary to very clearly and, by providing specific examples, explain that by shifting to the 'Russian world' they will certainly get official status for the Russian language, but in exchange will lose their right to freely voice their views in that language. An excellent example of such 'conflict of civilisations' was the demonstration of Russians in Sevastopol, whose participants actively welcomed the occupation, however, later they strongly opposed the corrupt abuses of the mayor, who was appointed by the occupation regime. The demonstration was dispersed by militia transferred from Russia, and the demonstrators were told in no uncertain terms that 'this is not Ukraine, here demonstrations are permitted only with the consent of the authorities'. This led to a storm of indignation with slogans 'This is not the Russia that we were fighting for!'.[59] The same applies to the absence of elected authorities in the RF in the sense that citizens are accustomed to in independent states – with a

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[59] http://gordonua.com/news/crimea/V-Sevastopole-protestuyushchie-potrebovali-otstavki-gubernato-ra-74566.html; http://www.unian.net/society/1067715-v-sevastopole-razognali-miting-protiv-bezzakoniya-mestnyih-okkupatsionnyih-vlastey-foto-video.html; http://ipress.ua/ru/video/rossyyskaya_polytsyya_ne_smo-gla_razognat_mytyng_v_sevastopole_61882.html

real alternative of parties and candidates, control over fair and free votes, etc. (recalling the 'conflict of mentalities' of the activists of the DPR accustomed to democracy and their supervisors in Moscow regarding the results in the 'elections of the Government of the DPR').

For a certain part of the Russian-speaking population (and as the experience of the Russian-speaking cities in the southern Ukraine, such as Odessa, Kherson or Nikolajev, quite a sizeable part), and primarily for the groups influential in the community as businessmen and intellectuals, the understanding that modern Russia is a totalitarian police state with a regime not actually elected by its people, and that it is specifically 'uncomfortable' national states of the 'title nations' actually ensures the fundamental European rights and freedoms even for their disloyal representatives, and that being in the minority in Ukraine or the Baltic states they have more rights, than being in majority in the Putin's RF is an important factor that deters from supporting the invasion.

As repudiation of the thesis about the 'Nazi threat' is one of the key factors in preventing the intervention (or, as a minimum, in compromising the positions of the invaders in the country and on the international arena), it is important to dedicate sufficient attention to national groups of radicals and the ultra-left. Their activities should be constantly and closely monitored, and, overall, such groups may be divided into the following three categories:

- national-patriotic organisations holding radical views, but that are however, prepared to cooperate with the state for the sake of victory over a common enemy;

- radical groups, consisting of mentally inadequate or criminally-minded individuals in principle not capable of achieving or complying with any agreements;

- groups specifically formed for the sake of provocations and funded from Russia.

The first group is the one with whom it is necessary to establish constructive cooperation based on non-interference in their political views, as they are impossible to 're-educate'. Nevertheless, it is possible to agree with them on temporary cooperation regarding the fight against the common enemy. It is particularly important to come to an agreement with them regarding a 'moratorium' on their part in public actions, which may be used by the Russian propaganda, or indispose the local ethnic minorities with respect to the indigenous nation. They may also be instrumental in controlling the other two groups of radicals as described above – the 'unreasonable' and 'fictitious', as in their viewpoint such groups inhibit the promotion of their political views and

support Russia. For instance, in Ukraine one of the most powerful information counter-attacks was the actions of the activists from the 'Right Sector', which publicly condemned any anti-Semitic actions and independently took the synagogue in Odessa under their own protection, having publicly released the plans of the Russian activists to set fire to the synagogue and subsequently accuse 'Ukrainian Nazis' of doing so.

It should be taken into account that, as a rule, the radical right groups view the police and the special services extremely negatively, however, they may cooperate with the military of their country.

With respect to the other two radical groups – the 'unreasonable' and the 'fictitious', it is necessary to combine the measures of police and public-political nature, namely: recording of such organisations and their activists and rigorous and prompt response to any provocation on their part, including public condemnation of their actions by politicians and the moral authorities of the indigenous nation, demonstration of the paucity and the insignificance of such groups, as well as prompt prosecution in accordance with the effective legislation.

And finally, among the most important elements in the set of measures aimed at pre-empting a Russian armed invasion, special attention should be dedicated to identifying and controlling the groups of direct and active influence as described in detail above.

In particular, by paraphrasing the famous French saying *'cherchez la femme'*, all the national special services and patriotic organisations should be clearly told: 'Look for Russian money!'.

The 'Russian world' has sufficient selfless and mislead supporters, however, as a rule, all pro-Russian organisations directly or via intermediaries receive funding from the RF.[60] From the viewpoint of their Kremlin 'masters', this direct dependence on Russian state financing ensures higher loyalty and the possibility to have constant control over the activity of such organisations as compared to the 'idea-driven' Russian national organisations that do not directly depend on the Kremlin.

One of the first measures in organising resistance to the Russian invasion must be the identification, recording and subsequent close monitoring of all national business-structures, whose commodity or financial trading with Russia is particularly large in comparison with other countries, and specifically the structures holding authorised capital of Russian origin, or whose volume of trade with Russia accounts for more than one-third of their total turnover.

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60   http://syur.info/o-rossijskoj-lobbistskoj-seti-v-evrope.html

The next step must be the identification and recording of those political parties and individual politicians that receive funding from the business structures related to Russia.

A task of crucial importance is the registration of all non-governmental organisations receiving funding from Russia. It should be borne in mind that such funding may be provided directly from Russia, or (which is much more often the case) through the donor assistance of the local business structures related to the big business of Russia. In the case of the Baltic States the possibility must be considered that funding from the RF may be channelled through banks and public organisations of the Republic of Belarus which has long been a 'buffer' for many 'grey', i.e. non-public and dubious financial operations between the RF and the EU Member States.

Another task to be undertaken in advance is the monitoring of all mass media with a Russian share in the authorised capital (irrespective of the language in which they conduct their activities), and all the Russian-speaking mass media in the country (irrespective of their formal owner).

In critical situations it is highly recommended to be prepared to introduce temporary restrictive measures with respect to all the organisations specified above. This could include suspension of their activities, temporarily blocking their accounts and freezing their assets until the situation in the country returns to normal. At the same time monitoring of their activities may be helpful in forecasting the beginning of a critical situation and at the same time prevent patriotic forces from being caught unawares.

And finally, special attention should be devoted to the early identification and monitoring of organisations presenting potential direct threat, i.e. potential participants of a military intervention.

Such organisations, in particular, include:

- local branches of illegal Russian ultra-right nationalistic organisations some of whom are outlawed in Russia itself for their radical views, however, they are supported by the FSB of the RF on the territories of neighbouring states);

- legal youth military-sport pro-Russian organisations, often camouflaged as organisations of 'patriotic education of the youth', in which 'patriotic education' is perceived not in the sense of the national-liberation struggle of the nations of the USSR against the totalitarian occupational regimes, but in the Soviet style and traditions focusing on the 'victory in the Great Patriotic war';

- organisations positioning themselves as 'anti-fascist', however, not opposing manifestations of Russian fascism, but rather focusing all their attention

exceptionally on the 'nationalism of the title nations', and associating themselves with the traditions of 'Soviet anti-fascism';

- youth sport (mainly, wrestling) clubs related to the local criminal world;

- organisations involved under the pretext of 'cultural and educational exchange' in dispatching young people to summer training camps in Russia;

- organisations of veterans of Afghanistan and other local conflicts (so-called 'fighters-internationalists');

– organisations of the so-called 'history re-enactors' engaged in the reconstruction of battle actions of historic wars; especially the teams who in the course of the 'historic enactment', as a rule play the role of the Red Army soldiers, troops of the NKVD or the Whites;

- organisations of the 'new left' claiming to be ideological successors of communism and propagating 'aggressive antifascism' where 'fascists' are considered to include all national-liberation movements of all nations of the former USSR.

In addition to the organisations there should be a separate recording of the personalities imminently threatening security, i.e.:

- pro-Russian activists who are formally allegedly loyal to the national state, but who in public make declarations demonstrating their support for the actions of Putin and the RF, their nostalgia for the USSR, their hostility towards the national-liberation movement of the indigenous nation (or 'nationalists' and 'supporters of Nazis' in the terminology of such activists), and testifying to their support of the repressive actions of the Soviet authorities;

- activists of the ultra-left organisations;

- all persons involved in training within a 'cultural and educational' exchange on the territory of Russia;

- all former officers of the Soviet army and, in particular, officers of the KGB, other special services, the GRU, special forces of the USSR residing in the country-potential victim of aggression irrespective of their current occupation.

Special attention should be dedicated to monitoring the Internet network. Two categories should be particularly followed:

-maintain personal records of bloggers calling for the destruction of national statehood, or at least making public declarations demonstrating their support

for the actions of Putin and the RF, their nostalgia for the USSR, their hostility towards the national-liberation movement of the indigenous nation (or 'nationalists' and 'supporters of Nazis' in the terminology of such activists), and testifying to their support of the repressive actions of the Soviet authorities;

- record and monitor day-to-day activities of pro-Russian groups in social networks. The statements will be later elaborated in detail. The Ukraine's experience has shown that on the one part the pro-Russian communities on social networks are instrumental in the rapid mobilisation of pro-Russian 'mass crowds'. On the other hand, however, they are rather susceptible to monitoring from the inside. It is fairly easy to infiltrate such networks under a fake name and story and obtain full access to the information communicated through such networks. And it is even easier when there is no need to create a story, and it is possible to infiltrate a network group as a patriot from the ethnic minorities, who has not been previously engaged in public activities and who can thus pose as a typical representative of the supporters of the 'Russian world' from among the Russian-speaking citizens of the new independent states. He can pretend to feel aversion to 'local nationalists' and nostalgia for the USSR and Putin's Russia. As our experience has shown a timely infiltration into networks makes it possible to obtain significant personal information about members of the pro-Russian communities, and information about their plans and intentions, up to obtaining operative information about all their actions with the participation of 'mass crowds'. Finding out the IP addresses of the participants of the network group makes it possible to compile personal catalogues of pro-Russian activists irrespective of their participation in 'conventional', non-internet organisations.

The people from all these categories must be temporarily detained in the very first days (and if possible, in the very first hours) after the Russian intervention until the normalisation of the situation in the country. In this respect, the first sufficiently aggressive provocations should be considered as the beginning of the intervention even when the involvement of foreign military forces is not yet obvious. Such preventive detention may be viewed as an 'anti-democratic' measure and trigger protests among politicians and some of society, including international protests (partly inspired by Russia, partly by the sincere incomprehension in the western world of the nature and the extent of the Russian threat). However, the events in Ukraine showed that such timely isolation of 'risk groups' makes it possible to avoid a significantly worse course of developments, averts mass military actions and multiple fatalities, and eventually, is much more beneficial in maintaining a democratic society.

A key element in the prevention of a 'hybrid' war, or its prompt suppression where such war is nevertheless launched, is the full mutual understanding and

the mutual cooperation of the national government, the police, army, patriotic paramilitary units, and the civil society.

Such interaction must be organised and ensured in advance, even in times of peace. Care must be taken in advance to facilitate both formal and informal contacts among the army commanders of all levels, officers of military intelligence, local police units, Mayor's offices of different towns and the patriotic organisations of the civil society, including paramilitary organisations of armed citizens (for instance, 'Riflemen Union'), as well as completely peaceful societies of patriotic orientation – societies of teachers, historians and journalists. It is absolutely necessary in times of peace to establish regular contacts between those groups and the army, so that in critical situations it would be possible in the very first hours of the invasion, even before receiving orders from the supreme authorities of the country (who may be hesitant for an extensive period of time to take responsible political decisions, thus giving more time for the enemy), to immediately set up joint military-civil 'crisis headquarters' in settlements. Such 'crisis headquarters' will be responsible for maintaining order in their settlements, mobilising all patriotic forces for resistance against the aggressor and ensuring interaction between the civil resistance and the units of the army and the police.

THE FIRST HOUR OF A 'HYBRID' WAR – A PLEDGE OF VICTORY

The very first days and even hours of an invasion are the most essential for victory in a 'hybrid' war. In that short time a range of political tasks must be resolved. In their entirety they will ensure that the plan for the Russian invasion will fail.

At the political level it is necessary to:

- publicly address the nation and the international community as soon as practically possible and declare that the on-going developments are not internal, and that the country has been attacked by an external military force;

- demonstrate the determination of the country (the government, its army and the civil society) to mobilise itself and reverse the foreign aggression by joint and coordinated efforts;

- demonstrate mass support for the national state and its legitimate government, and clearly show that neither in the entire country, nor in its individual localities, do the Russian alignments represent the will of the majority, but are rather a

marginal minority pursuing objectives that are alien to the will of the majority of the population;

- organise presentations by representatives of the ethnic and language minorities explaining that they are not oppressed in the national state, and they are not calling for protection from Russia, but rather on the contrary – they are calling the world's community to protect them together with the other citizens against the Russian occupation;

- demonstrate that the society (with the active participation of women and children) wholeheartedly supports the actions of the national army so that soldiers do not have the slightest doubt that they are an 'instrument of the government against the nation', but rather protectors of own nation against the foreign invaders and their puppets;

- demonstrate a mass mobilisation of volunteers to divisions of territorial defence;

- publicly and on behalf of the government of the country and its civil society appeal to the world's community with a request to provide military assistance in order to reverse the international intervention.

In the very first hours of the aggression the military and the police forces must take the following urgent measures:

- impose an immediate temporary suspension of any movement through the state border with the RF and other countries with deployed military forces of the RF (for example, with the Republic of Belarus);

- order immediate disconnection of all Russian TV channels and radio stations, terminate the publication and distribution of Russian print publications;

- order temporary detention and deportation from the country of all Russian correspondents, as most of them are actually not independent journalists, but conscientious participants of the information and propaganda accompaniment of the military invasion;

- strengthen control over the state border with army forces so that diversionary groups cannot penetrate the border and assume control of border control stations.

- deploy military units in the border areas, and arrange a permanent patrol over the entire area with a view to detecting subversive groups invading the country through locations other than border control points; fight such groups with firearms as soon as they are detected while using all available measures

in order to detain, kill or push them beyond the borders of the country (considering, however, that persecution of such units on foreign soil may lead to extremely serious military-political complications, therefore pending the beginning of large scale military actions divisions of the national army must be prohibited from crossing the state border);

- in case enemy units occupy border control points or subversive groups break through in between the border control points, immediately establish a checkpoint system which duplicates the border control points some several kilometres from the state border;

- close off all the main transport junctions in the country, all entry points into the city with checkpoints, and control all transport vehicles passing through the key settlements (thorough inspection with simultaneous checks of documents). Such operations require significant human resources and should therefore be performed, under the leadership of police, by forces of volunteers from the local divisions of territorial self-defence and their volunteer supporters from among patriotic civil activists;

- organise round-the-clock protection (actually, defence) of the most important civil buildings – the buildings of the government, the parliament, Mayor's offices in towns, police headquarters, and television and radio stations. The protection of airports and radio stations is best organised by forces of the police and specially trained anti-terrorist divisions, as most probably attacks on such buildings will be carried out by small groups of well-trained fighters from the special forces of the RF. It is highly recommended to involve volunteers from the territorial self-defence and civil activists in the protection of such buildings, so that defending such buildings does not appear as the 'protection of the authorities against the nation', but rather as a nation-wide defence against the external aggression. The most desirable solution would be to protect administrative buildings with armed fighters or the army and police forces on the inside, and to build a ring of barricades from the outside which will be protected by unarmed civil activists;

- mobilise reservists of the national armed forces and the territorial defence divisions, at the same time organise the recording, registration and mobilisation of volunteers previously not enlisted (as our experience has shown, a large number of patriotically minded citizens do not consider it expedient to be enlisted in the military registry in times of peace, however, in the face of an invasion they immediately apply to be admitted as army volunteers);

- ensure the immediate exit of all army divisions from their permanent deployment locations (military bases and barracks), especially those located within the limits of residential settlements, and put the army on alert status outside the populated areas, as the military bases and barracks will be subject to blocking

by allegedly 'unarmed civilian' pro-Russian activists (as a rule using women, the elderly and children as a shield for the groups of the RF special forces between the invaders and the national army). Blocking military bases with appeals of 'do not use the army against the peaceful population' is one of the key threats at the early stages of the invasion, because that significantly demoralises the soldiers causing them to have doubts regarding the legitimacy of using force against civilians, thus creating an extremely adverse 'picture' in international media, and most importantly – allows the enemy to win some time to occupy strategically important buildings, draw up reserves of invaders, etc.

- eliminate large weapons storage facilities by dispersing the guns to numerous small storage places, or (preferably) handing them over to volunteers and mobilised reservists, as one of the key objectives of the invaders is to take over large weapons and ammunition storage places. In addition, such attacks will usually use 'live shields' of peaceful civilians. Occupation of even one weapons' warehouse not only enables the enemy to actually equip huge numbers of local pro-Russian activists with arms, but most importantly, makes it possible to conceal the supply of guns from the RF, as subsequently all the weapons and ammunitions used by Russian invaders will be presented to the mass media as 'trophies' seized from the warehouses of the local army or police;

- warn the local population of the possibility of Russian air attacks, and inform it about the location of the closest bomb shelters, and how to proceed in case of an air-raid warning. Furthermore, efforts should be made to make such warning as public as possible, as in that case in addition to the main and immediate goal (avoiding panic among the peaceful population and saving the lives of civilians in case of an air raid), a political goal is achieved – additional confirmation that the ongoing events are a foreign military intervention, rather than an 'internal' war;

- immediately build a complete system of territorial defence from civil volunteers and army reservists, essentially consisting of two key components (distinguished on the basis of age, health status and the previous military training of reservists and volunteers) without waiting for the beginning of the invasion of large-scale military contingents of the RF: use civil police units to search and disarm subversive groups deployed in the country and the local agency of the enemy, and guerrilla groups that take up positions in border areas. This defence system, on the order of the army command, can independently carry out sabotage acts against the attacking enemy forces, firstly, mine-laying, anti-tank fire, building ambush against the columns of moving machinery. They can also carry out intelligence work and artillery adjustment for the forces of the national army operating in the area;

- make every possible attempt to capture citizens of the Russian Federation participating in the aggression alive (or, in an extreme case, try to kill them

and find the documents expressly confirming their nationality on their bodies). Immediately display the captured citizens to the national media and to foreign journalists and the diplomatic corps as live proof of the foreign intervention (or, in the worst case – their documents). Thus concurrently two objectives are achieved – international military assistance is obtained and the population in the country-victim of aggression (all those still doubting will receive evidence of an external invasion, rather than a 'civil' conflict) is mobilised.

The developments in Ukraine demonstrated that in the regions (Odessa, Kharkov, Kherson, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporozhye, Mariupol), where the national government and the patriotic civil activists managed in a timely manner to undertake at least most of the measures described above, they managed to halt the Russian invasion at its very early stage thus avoiding significant casualties (48 fatalities in Odessa, mostly on the side of the enemy,[61] 2 in Kharkov,[62] 2 in Mariupol,[63] and no fatalities in other regions). In the regions where all or nearly all such measures were implemented (Kiev, Chernigov, etc.) all actions of the 'Russian spring' came down to just a few terrorist actions of the local underground movement and the professional subversive units brought from abroad. However, in locations where for different reasons the enforcement of such measures was delayed, the result was a full occupation by the military forces of the RF (the Crimea), or a full-scale war, where the number of casualties on both sides is already estimated to be 6,000 (minimum estimate of the UN, clearly underestimated[64]) up to 50,000 (estimate of the German intelligence),[65]), and the end to which is not foreseen in the near future (Donbass).

In addition, in the case of Ukraine, the measures described above affected only the invaders and Ukrainian society, as the external political assistance to our country was very limited – partly as a result of the successful Russian diplomatic and information preparation, and partly as a result of the preceding 'non-bloc' and 'neutrality' policy pursued by the authorities of Ukraine. In the case of the Baltic states it is absolutely vital to persuade the allies in the NATO bloc that the situation is to be defined as an international intervention within the meaning of Article 5 of the Atlantic Charter, and the attainment of the objective (facilitated by a number of measures defined earlier) may accelerate the suppression of the Russian aggression at its earliest stage even more significantly than in the case of Ukraine.

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61 http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2014/06/21/7029726/
62 http://www.utro.ru/articles/2014/03/15/1182205.shtml
63 http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2014/06/ukrainian-troops-regain-port-city-mariupol-201461393754228959.html
64 http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/ausland/ukraine-sicherheitskreise-bis-zu-50-000-tote-13416132.html
65 http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/ausland/ukraine-sicherheitskreise-bis-zu-50-000-tote-13416132.html

AFTERWORD

'Warned means armed'. The author of the present text, as opposed to most authors of textbooks, hopes more than anything else that the readers of the present paper will never have to use in practice what he has described or advised. Still it would be best if the 'Russian spring in the Baltic' forever remains only a delirious dream of the Kremlin ideologists that has never been realised. But the more seriously society and the army considers the threat of an invasion, and the earlier the resistance to the invasion is prepared, the more likely it will be that the enemy will not take the risk to move from theory to practical aggression, and that the practical advice from the present text will remain 'material for reflection' by the military, politicians and civil activists in the Baltic countries. If this text helps the Baltic states to better prepare to reverse the 'hybrid' aggression of Russia, and thus to reduce, by at least one per cent, the probability of such aggression, and increase the chances of the Baltic states to confront it at a very early stage, with 'little blood', the author will consider his combat mission successfully accomplished.

CHRONICLE OF THE 'HYBRID' WAR OF RUSSIA AGAINST UKRAINE: THE INITIAL STAGE

(Jaroslav Prishchepa)

Apparently, the ruling regime of Russia perceived the threat of the developments of Euromaidan long before the culmination of the events which took place in Kiev in February 2015. On **27 February 2013**, in Simferopol under the flags of the pro-Russian organisations (the Communist party of Ukraine, 'Russian bloc', the 'Russian movement of the Crimea' and others) a rally took place with the principal demand to hold an all-Ukraine referendum on the accession of Ukraine into the Customs Union of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan.[66] The Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea has on numerous occasions declared its support for the actions of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.[67] Later the Presidium of the Supreme Council of Crimea appealed to the residents of the peninsula with a call 'to be prepared to protect the autonomy' under the pretext of protection against 'threat of colour revolutions', which will inevitably lead to a loss of 'the right to speak, write and obtain education in Russian, the native language for the majority of residents of the Crimea.[68]

On December 16 (i.e. less than two weeks after the first serious clashes between the protesters on the Maidan and the military divisions, and three weeks after the beginning of the protest actions), a sacred procession and an action in support of the accession of Ukraine to the Customs Union was held in Sevastopol. Among others, active participants of the rally were bikers including

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66   http://qha.com.ua/v-simferopole-storonniki-ts-mitingovali-za-referendum-131635.html
67   http://www.analitik.org.ua/current-comment/int/529c9ae888b42/pagedoc1096_4/; http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2013/11/22/7002781/; http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2013/11/27/7003199/?attempt=1
68   http://www.unian.net/politics/862503-parlament-kryima-reshil-evromaydan-ugrojaet-avtonomii-poluos-trova.html

an infamous supporter of Putin, Aleksandr Zaldostanov ('Surgeon').[69] In the course of the rally local political activists, to be exact, a deputy of the Sevastopol city council Evegnij Dubovnik, declared that the action was only preventive, but 'Sevastopol could also rise up '. In addition to the calls to suppress Euromaidan, there were calls to revise the nationality of the Crimea. In addition, at the end of November and the beginning of December the then authorities of Ukraine organised in a number of cities (Kiev, Donetsk, Odessa, Kherson) rallies of opponents to European integration in support of the authorities and which was named 'anti-Maidan'.[70]

On the same day a rally took place in Odessa for the federalisation of the country and accession of Ukraine to the Custom Union.[71]

On **24 January 2014,** the party 'Russian bloc' declared the enlistment of troops for self-defence ' to fight the Bandera rascals'.[72] In addition, Genadij Basov, the leader of the party declared that among those applying to enlist were citizens not only from Ukraine, but also Russia, Belarus, Moldova, Transdniestria and other states.

On **26 January 2014**, at the buildings of the regional state administration in Zaporozhye clashes took place between supporters of Maidan and the representatives and supporters of the authorities. The latter, as a distinctive sign used the black-orange St. George Ribbons and flags.[73]

On **27 January 2014,** in Donetsk, supporters of the effective power organised 'volunteer militias' to patrol the town. These volunteers were recruited by members of the organisations of veterans of Afghanistan, participants of the Cossack movements.[74] An identical statement was made in Odessa by Anton Davidchenko, the leader of the organisation 'Youth Unity'.[75] At the same time in Sevastopol a number of pro-Russian organisations made some separatist statements (which were not supported by the then authorities of the Crimea) about the intention to withdraw from the legal framework of Ukraine and create a Russia-oriented 'federal state Little Russia (Malorossiya), if the opposition were to access power in Ukraine.[76] Members of the biker club 'Night wolves'

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69   http://news.sevas.com/politics/sevastopol_miting_za_tamozhennyy_soyuz_baykery_13_dekabrya_2013

70   http://lb.ua/news/2013/11/24/242529_mihaylovskoy_ploshchadi_kieva.html;   http://www.ostro.org/do-netsk/politics/articles/432692/]   [http://112.ua/obshchestvo/v-odesse-proshel-miting-za-vstuplenie-ukrainy-v-tamozhennyy-soyuz-3552.html; http://1big.ru/news/society/3166-na-yuge-ukrainy-vystupili-protiv-evromayda-na.html

71   http://112.ua/obshchestvo/v-odesse-proshel-miting-za-vstuplenie-ukrainy-v-tamozhennyy-soyuz-3552.html

72   http://topnews.sebastopol.ua/other/2014/01/24/11272.html

73   http://www.061.ua/news/462085

74   http://newsru.com/arch/world/27jan2014/donetsk.html

75   http://timer-odessa.net/news/v_odesse_sformirovali_narodnuyu_drujinu_724.html

76   ttp://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/rolling_news_russian/2014/01/140127_ru_n_crimea_sevastopol_separa-tism.shtml

declared the beginning of patrolling at the Sevastopol administration building, and their preparedness to take other administrative buildings under protection if the situation were to worsen.[77]

On **18 February 2014**, after the worsening of the confrontation on the Maidan, the Presidium of the Supreme Council of Crimea made a statement to the effect that actually 'civil war had broken out in Ukraine, and demanded that President Yanukovytch take extraordinary measures to stabilise the situation. Furthermore, the Supreme Council of the ARC[78] declared that it 'reserved the right to call on the residents of the autonomy to protect civilian peace and order on the peninsula'.[79]

On **February 19**, the building of the Odessa Regional State Administration and the military agencies were blocked with large pieces of concrete and surrounded by employees of the Ministry of the Interior and civilians.

On **February 20**, while considering the issue 'On the public-political situation in Ukraine' an extraordinary meeting of the Supreme Council of the ARC declared itself prepared for the separation of Crimea from Ukraine 'in case of a change of the legitimate power'[80].

On **February 21**, at the building of the Supreme Council of the ARC pro-Russian activists held protest actions demanding the secession of the Crimea from Ukraine, and the establishment in its territory of an independent state. Supporters of Maidan attempted to hold a response action but this was disrupted by the representatives of the 'Kremlin Cossacks' and the 'People's liberation movement'.[81]

In Mariupol, a rally was held supporting the Crimean separatists and as a protest against the change of power, during which a Russian flag was raised on the administration building.

On the night of **22 February** V.Yanukovytch left Kiev, and according to the available information headed towards Kharkov to participate in the Congress of deputies of South-East Ukraine.[82] This was announced in advance by the Governor of the Kharkov region Michail Dobrynin,[83] and presumably could refuse to recognise the removal of V.Yanukovytch from power, and even the exit of the regions from Ukraine.

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77   http://lenta.ru/news/2014/01/27/wolfs/
78   ARC - Autonomous Republic of Crimea. *Editor's comment*
79   http://interfax.com.ua/news/political/190767.html
80   http://vesti-ukr.com/krym/38496-krym-gotovitsja-podnjat-vopros-ob-otdelenii-ot-ukrainy
81   http://www.3652.ru/news/480571
82   http://interfax.com.ua/news/political/191813.html
83   http://vesti-ukr.com/harkov/38693-v-harkove-projdet-sezd-deputatov-vseh-urovnej-jugo-vostoka-i-kryma

The 'Congress of all levels of deputies of the South-East regions of Ukraine, AR Crimea and Sevastopol' held on 22 February at the initiative of the governor of Kharkov M.Dobkin was attended by both Ukrainian and Russian state and political figures (total 3,777 persons[84]), including the head of the Committee of the State Duma of the RF, and governors of several Russian regions bordering the Ukrainian border.[85] Even then the participants of the Congress were actively using the black-orange 'St. George' symbols. 'For a number of reasons' V. Yanukovytch did not show up at the Congress. Crowds of employees of budgetary institutions were delivered to the Sports Palace in Kharkov and handed posters and banners with slogans supporting the ex-President. Contrary to expectations,[86] the organisers did not risk making direct separatist statements (most probably due to the absence of Yanukovytch), and only appealed to residents of the eastern regions of Ukraine to enlist in the divisions of self-defence, and promised to ensure constitutional order on such territories. At the same time there were declarations that the change in power was a pre-planned armed coup d'état committed with with the participation of foreign states. Evgenij Zhilin, the head of the pro-Russian organisation 'Oplot' called on the deputies to facilitate the formation of armed divisions, and supply them with ammunition.[87] Immediately after the Congress Michail Dobkin, the Governor of the Kharkov region and Genadij Kernes, the Mayor of Kharkov left the territory.[88]

On **February 22**, with the participation of the local militia, traffic police and pro-Russian activists check-posts were established in Crimea on the border with Sevastopol.[89]

The formal cause that allowed the RF to legitimise its actions with respect to South-East Ukraine was when they put the issue regarding the abolition of a law on regional languages, which had been passed several years earlier with serious infringements, to a vote by the Ukrainian Parliament on 23 February. The discussion of the issue at the Parliament was declared to be an 'assault on the rights of the Russian-speaking population of Ukraine'. The Chairman of the Parliament Alesandr Turchinov refused to sign the resolution on the abolition of the law until a new law was drafted.[90] Later the abolition of the law was referred to as a mistake by Radoslav Sikorskij, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland, and the newly elected President of Ukraine Piotr Poroshenko.[91]

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84   http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2014/02/22/7015689/
85   http://www.mk.ru/politics/sng/article/2014/02/22/988928-separatistskiy-shabash-v-harkove-na-dele-okazalsya-obyichnyim-sobraniem-deputatov.html
86   http://lb.ua/news/2014/02/22/256611_segodnya_harkove_proydet_sezd.html
87   http://www.1tv.ru/news/world/252776
88   http://www.interfax.ru/world/360418
89   http://www.segodnya.ua/regions/krym/na-vezdah-v-sevastopol-ustanovili-blokposty-iz-betonnyh-blokov-498865.html
90   http://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/1018787
91   http://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/1007101;   http://www.lefigaro.fr/international/2014/06/27/01003-20140627ARTFIG00363-le-president-ukrainien-explique-son-plan-de-paix-au-figaro.php

On the very same day a rally of separatist orientation was held in Sevastopol, which actually overturned the local authorities, declaring the refusal by Sevastopol of the most recent resolutions of the Ukrainian parliament, while a citizen of the RF Aleksej Chalyj was declared 'the people's mayor'. The leader of the 'Russian bloc' party Genadij Basov declared the beginning of formation of self-defence troops.[92]

On **February 24,** a public organisation 'Odessa alternative' in Odessa appealed to their 'compatriots' Russia, Belarus and Transdniestria calling them to come and defend the city and support the Odessa resistance.[93]

On **February 25,** pro-Russian activists drew up a 'Letter of the fifty' and read it publicly to residents of the city at the building of the Supreme Council of Crimea. The message of the letter was on the necessity to hold, as soon as possible, a referendum on the status of Crimea.[94]

On **February 26,** the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people held a rally with slogans to avert the separation of the Crimea and block the building of the Supreme Council of the ARC. Two people were killed at the rally and tens injured.[95] Pro-Russian activists were forced out of the territory of the institution. Subsequently Crimean Tatar people removed the blockade around the building of the Council having declared their intention to form their own self-defence militias.[96]

On **February 27**, a group of armed individuals without any identification marks, however, later identified as Russian military, occupied the buildings of the Council of Ministers and the Supreme Council of the AR Crimea, raised the flag of the RF on the building and surrounded the building with barricades.[97] Having gathered in the building of the Supreme Council the deputies declared their refusal to recognise the legitimacy of the new Ukrainian government, sent the Council of Ministers of the autonomy into retirement, and appointed Sergej Aksionov, a pro-Russian activist, in the past known as a member of the Crimean organised crime group 'Salem'[98] as the leader. According to the data available, it was the members of that group, together with the Crimean branch of the all-Russia (and de facto, international) organisation 'Bojevoje bratstvo' ('Combat brotherhood') consisting of Russian veterans of different military conflicts, that represented the armed forces of the pro-Russian protests including the occupation of government buildings and facilitating unimpeded infiltration of

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92   http://new-sebastopol.com/news/novosti_sevastopolya/Russkiy_blok_Mi_nachinaem_segodnya_sozdavat_v_Sevastopole_silovie_strukturi_samooboroni

93   http://timer-odessa.net/news/odessiti_prosyat_pomoschi_u_rossii_belorussii_i_pridnestrov_ya_940.html

94   http://c-pravda.ru/newspapers/2014/03/04/volna-osvobozhdeniya

95   http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2014/02/26/7016376/; http://snob.ru/selected/entry/72653

96   http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2014/02/26/7016376/

97   http://www.interfax.ru/world/361409

98   http://uainfo.org/blognews/380669-kto-zhe-otdal-krym-putinu.html; http://vlasti.net/news/49221

Russian armed forces deeper in the territory of the Crimea.[99] The referendum on the status of the Crimea was initially fixed for May 25, but the date was later advanced.[100]

On the same day the Crimean 'Berkut'[101] blocked the roads on the Perekop isthmus and the Chongar peninsula which served as routes for inland communication between the peninsula and the continental part of Ukraine.[102]

On the night between **February 27** and **February 28**, Russian military occupied the airports in Sevastopol and Simferopol in order to prevent representatives of the Ukrainian military agencies from penetrating into the territory.

On **February 28**, in the Crimea, Russian military occupied the building of the enterprise Ukraeroruch, which was responsible for controlling the airspace of the autonomy. Russian forces used a missile boat to block Ukrainian vessels from exiting Balaklavskya Bay. At the same time Brigade 810 of the marine forces of the RF blocked the Sevastopol squadron of the marine security border forces in Balaklavskya Bay on the pretext of preventing the seizure of ammunition by extremists.[103] The next facility occupied by the Russian forces was a military airport in the urban settlement of Novofiodovka. About ten helicopters were transferred from the RF to the region of Sevastopol, armoured vehicles of Russian military without any identification signs were circulating in the town. The Russian military seized control of all the television channels of the Crimea, telephone communication nodes, Kerchen ferry crossing and other key facilities of infrastructure.

On the night of **28 February/1 March 2014**, the representatives of the 'self-defence' and the Russian military forces without distinctive identification signs started blocking Ukrainian military units. They occupied the centre of Sevastopol, and deployed machine-gun nests next to the building of the Supreme Council.

Rallies protesting against the new government of the country were held in a number of towns of South-East Ukraine (Kharkov, Lugansk, Donetsk, Dnepropetrovsk, Nikolayiv, Odessa, Kherson, Kramatorsk, Enakijevo, Shakhtersk, Artemovsk, Konstantinovka, Severodonetsk, etc.). Such rallies were accompanied by mass riots and fights where tens of people were injured.

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99   http://uainfo.org/blognews/380669-kto-zhe-otdal-krym-putinu.html
100   http://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2014/02/27_a_5929021.shtml
101   ‚Berkut'– Special Police Units under the territorial divisions of the Ministry of the Interior of Ukraine, operating in 1992-2014. *Editor's comment*
102   http://vizit.ks.ua/news/post_chongar_kontroliruet_krymskij_berkut_podchinennyj_janukovichu/2014-02-27-3148
103   http://interfax.com.ua/news/general/193415.html

In Kharkov the participants of the pro-Russian rally 'For Kharkov', with the help of citizens of the RF attacked the regional state administration building that was blocked by supporters of the Euromaidan, and raised a Russian flag on its roof.[104]

In Donetsk, an anti-government meeting introduced Pavel Gubarev, the leader of the 'people's militia of Donbass'[105] in the role of the 'people's governor for the first time ever. He made a number of statements of separatist nature.[106] Donetsk authorities announced the formation of a municipal militia in the territory of the town[107], while the authorities of Lugansk declared that the new government was illegitimate. Several statements were made about the role of the special relations between the Donesk and the Lugansk regions with the Russian Federation, and about the right to appeal to the RF for assistance.

In Odessa, the leader of the pro-Russian protest Anton Davidchenko voiced a number of demands to the central and the municipal authorities, including the demand for federalisation and granting Russian the status of the state official language. Flags of Odessa, Ukraine and Russia were raised on the flagpole of the House of Trade Unions[108].

In the evening of **March 1**, following the appeal of Sergej Aksionov and V.Yanukovytch, the Federation Council authorised the Russian president Vladimir Putin to use Russian military forces on the territory of Ukraine.[109]

On **March 2,** the building of the headquarters of the Ukrainian Navy was blocked and cut from the power supply. By the evening of the same day most of the bases of the Ukrainian defence agencies were blocked or occupied. On the night of **March 2/March 3**, after some of the heads of the Ukrainian military agencies had broken their military oath and defected to the self-proclaimed authorities of the Crimea, an announcement was made that independent military structures were formed in the Crimea.[110]

On **March 3**, participants of the rally against the appointment of Sergej Taruta as Governor of the Donetsk region started collecting signatures in support of holding a referendum on the status of Donbass.[111] In the second half of the day the building of the regional administration was stormed and occupied.[112]

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104   http://www.segodnya.ua/politics/pnews/flag-rossii-na-zdanie-harkovskoy-oga-podnyal-mos-kvich-499886.html
105   http://www.rbc.ru/rbcfreenews/20140306193140.shtml
106   http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2421338
107   http://korrespondent.net/world/worldabus/3313979-vostochnuui-ukraynu-okhvatyla-voina-fla-hov-kommersant
108   http://kp.ua/odessa/441472-pod-lykovanye-mytynhuuischykh-v-odesse-podnialy-flah-rossyy
109   http://council.gov.ru/press-center/news/39851/
110   http://www.kianews.com.ua/news/glavy-pyati-silovyh-struktur-kryma-prinesli-prisyagu-narodu
111   http://vz.ru/news/2014/3/3/675276.html
112   http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2014/03/3/7017289/

Some serious clashes took place in Odessa between the supporters of Euromaidan and the pro-Russian activists, where the latter were demanding the deputies of the extraordinary session to consider the requirements to the local authorities drafted at the meeting of March 1. As a result, the administration building was attacked and occupied, the Ukrainian flag was lowered and replaced by a Russian flag. Anton Davidchenko, the leader of the protest action and the organisation 'Narodnaya alternativa' ('People's alternative') and 'Molodiozhnoje edinstvo' (Youth Unity') announced that the regional authorities agreed to a number of the requirements.

On **March 4**, President Putin announced at a press conference that the participants in the developments in Crimea were not Russian military forces, but rather 'self-defence' representatives of the Crimea.[113] On the same day an attempt was made to seize Ukrainian vessels.

On the morning of **March 5**, information was received that large numbers of pro-Russian fighters were arriving to seize power. Russian journalists were also coming to create the required information background. In response, supporters of Euromaidan in cooperation with militia officers took buildings of the Odessa regional state administration under increased protection.[114]

In Donetsk the militia temporarily evacuated the building of the Donetsk regional state administration having received information that mines were being planted in the building, however, later on the same day the building was again taken over by the separatists.[115]

A rally in Lugansk announced Aleksandr Charitonov as the 'people's governor of the Lugansk region' and the decision to hold a referendum on federalisation on March 30.

In the Crimea Sergej Aksenov called on Ukrainian fighters to side with him while guaranteeing solutions to different social and financial problems.[116]

On **March 6**, the militia again evacuated the building of the Donetsk Regional State Administration, and in the evening officers of the Ukrainian Security Service arrested P. Gubarev.

The self-proclaimed authorities of the Crimea announced their determination to become part of Russia and to this end they scheduled a referendum for March 16.

113   http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20366
114   http://timer-odessa.net/news/v_odesskoy_oga_gotovyatsya_k_shturmu_473.html
115   http://www.unian.net/politics/893471-v-donetske-vzyali-shturmom-oga-s-krikami-berkut-i-rossiya.html
116   http://15minut.org/article/aksenov-priglashaet-v-krymskuju-armiju-zapugivaja-banderovca-mi-2014-03-05-08-54-2014-03-05-09-18-04

At the rally next to the building of the Odessa Regional State Administration one of the leaders of the pro-Russian protest Igor Markov called for the decentralisation of power in Ukraine.[117] In the course of the searches conducted on the same day in the premises of Nikolaj Stadnik, the leader of one of the pro-Russian Cossak movements in Odessa, officers of the Ministry of the Interior seized weapons and masks that had slits for eyes.[118]

On **March 9**, pro-Russian activists occupied the building of the Lugansk Regional State Administration and raised the Russian flag.

At a pro-Russian rally held on the Kulikov field in Odessa a representative of the Crimea called on the residents of Odessa to form self-defence divisions, and promised help in providing political asylum should there be any problems with the Ukrainian authorities. Similar statements were made by S. Aksionov, the leader of the Crimean separatists.[119]

On **March 11**, the Supreme Council of the ARC and Sevastopol municipal Council adopted a declaration on the independence of the ARC and Sevastopol.

On **March 13**, fighting broke out between pro-Russian separatists and Ukrainian activists, during which between one and three persons were killed, and about 50 were injured.[120]

In Lugansk, the Security Service of Ukraine detained the 'people's governor of the Lugansk region' A. Charitonov.[121]

On **March 14**, in Kharkov, fighting erupted between pro-Russian and pro-Ukrainian activists on Rymarska street; two members of the separatist 'People's militia' were killed, several were injured.[122]

In relation to the development of events in Donetsk, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the RF issued statements claiming that the Ukrainian authorities were not able to control the situation in the country, and announced the right of Moscow to take its compatriots in Ukraine under its protection.[123]

117　http://timer-odessa.net/news/igor_markov_dlya_sohraneniya_strani_nujno_rasshirit_polnomochiya_regionov_496.html

118　http://timer-odessa.net/news/mvd_nachinaet_zachistku_neugodnih_organizatsiy_v_odesse_265.html

119　http://timer-odessa.net/news/prem_er_krima_obratilsya_k_odessitam_video_134.html

120　http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2014/03/14/7018716/;　http://www.donzdrav.gov.ua/index.php/reforma/zahodi/povidomlennya-departamentu-ohoroni-zdorovya-doneckoyi-oblder/; http://novosti.dn.ua/details/220135/

121　http://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/1045437

122　http://vesti.ua/harkov/42604-v-harkove-ubit-zhitel-dnepropetrovska-i-ranen-odessit

123　http://www.interfax.ru/russia/364661;　http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/0/6F745B0774C71C9644257C9B00362EB6

On **March 15**, in Donetsk the participants of the march supporting the Crimean referendum managed to block the building of the Security Service with the demand to free the activists detained at the Regional State Administration, including Pavel Gubarev. The head of the Security Service of Ukraine promised to do this.

On **March 16**, a referendum was held in the Crimea. The referendum was not recognised as legitimate by most countries.

An attempt was made by local residents to block the passage of Ukrainian armoured vehicles near Volnovacha town.

On **March 17**, the self-proclaimed authorities of the Crimea declared the peninsula to be an independent state. Shortly thereafter the same authorities rushed to apply to the Russian Federation with a request to accept the peninsula into the RF as a new subject of the Federation.[124]

In the Donetsk region pro-Russian activists blocked the movement of Ukrainian armed vehicles, military units, as well as bridges and infrastructure objects near the Russian-Ukrainian border.

On **March 18 2014**, the Crimea and Sevastopol became part of the RF as a Republic, and cities of federal significance. Shortly after the accession repressions commenced on the peninsula against members of the Crimean Tartar people and pro-Ukrainian citizens.

On **March 19**, the Security Service of Ukraine detained one of the leaders of the organisation 'Donetsk Republic', Andrej Purgin.

On **March 22**, Russian military fighters in the Crimea stormed and occupied a Ukrainian airbase in Belbek, the fighting lasted until 28 February 2015.

On **March 20**, participants of a pro-Russian rally in Odessa declared their intentions to establish a system of self-governance that would be in complete control of the local authorities and demanded that the prosecution of political activists cease. There were also some clashes with supporters of Euromaidan who were holding a meeting in the vicinity.

On **April 5,** the buildings of the City Council and the Prosecutor's Office were occupied after a rally in Mariupol for a referendum on the status of Donbass. The release of the 'people's mayor' Dmitrij Kuzmenko was also demanded.[125]

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124   http://tass.ru/ekonomika/1053263
125   http://ria.ru/world/20140405/1002672815.html

On **April 6,** pro-Russian separatists occupied the administrative buildings in the Donetsk, Lugansk and Kharkov regions.[126] In Lugansk the building of the Security Service was stormed and occupied.[127]

On **April 7,** announcements were made in Donetsk on the establishment of the 'Donetsk People's Republic', and the referendum to be held on May 11.[128]

Announcements made in Kharkov on the establishment of the 'Kharkov People's Republic'.

In Nikolayev, pro-Russian activists attempted to storm the building of the Regional State Administration, but were not successful.

On **April 8,** an anti-terrorist operation of the Ministry of the Interior liberated the building of the Kharkov Regional State Administration and detained tens of pro-Russian separatists.[129]

One of the leaders of the pro-Russian protest movement in Odessa, Artiom Davidchenko, declared that should any attempt be taken to disperse the anti-Maidan tent camp on the Kulikov field, it would be met with resistance.[130]

On **April 9**, in Zaporozhye representatives of Euro-Maidan and Ukrainian Cossack movement, and militia officers started building check posts around the city to protect it from separatists.[131]

On **April 10**, Denis Pushilin, the leader of the self-proclaimed DPR announced the formation of its own army.

On **April 12**, a group of armed individuals dressed in uniforms with black-orange 'St. George's Ribbons', calling themselves the 'People's militia of Donbass' occupied the city's administration building and the regional headquarters of the militia in Slaviansk and raised the Russian flag over the buildings. Among the occupants were citizens of the RF, later identified as participants of the 'Strelkov's group' led by a citizen of the RF, reserve officer Igor Girkin, operating under the call-sign 'Strelkov'.[132] The weapons from the occupied headquarters of the militia were distributed to local separatist supporters. Using these weapons

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126   http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-27008054
127   http://vesti-ukr.com/donbass/46096-v-luganske-prorossijskie-aktivisty-vybili-okna-i-dveri-v-zdanii-sbu
128   http://itar-tass.com/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/1102559
129   http://ria.ru/world/20140411/1003533739.html
130   http://timer-odessa.net/news/narodnaya_drujina_prigrozila_odesskomu_gubernatoru_i_pravomu_sek-toru_680.html
131   http://www.day.kiev.ua/ru/news/090414-na-vezdah-v-zaporozhe-sozdayutsya-blokposty-protiv-propla-chennyh-separatistov.
132   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mG8VLYgEa5c] [http://podrobnosti.ua/973431-kto-takoj-lider-samo-oborony-v-slavjanske-polkovnik-iz-rossii-i-ljubitel-voennoj-rekonstruktsii-foto.html

the occupants started organising detachments of fighters, equipping them with anti-tank means that the occupants most probably brought with them.[133] Among the active supporters of the occupants was the Mayor of Slaviansk Nelia Shtepa who called on participants of the meeting at the city's administration to support the fighters: 'The entire city became a shield' thus defending the fighters who had occupied the building'.[134] In the weeks that followed the practice of using 'live shields', as earlier demonstrated in the Crimea, became further widespread and was used to prevent the armed forces of Ukraine from liberating occupied territories and building.

In the course of the following 3 days Russia and DPL flags were raised over occupied administrative buildings in Artemovsk, Kramatorsk, Jenakijevo, Krasnyj Liman, Druzhkovki, Makejevki, Mariupol, Gorlovka, Khartsyzsk and other towns. The separatists at that time were in fact controlling only the territory of Slaviansk, where they organised checkpoints, and partly Kramatorsk and Druzhkovka. In the remaining towns the separatists only controlled a few buildings.[135]

On **April 13**, in response to the developments in Slaviansk the Ukrainian Headquarters of the national defence of the Dnepropetrovsk region announced the formation of the battalion 'Dnepr'.

In Zaporozhye, after some clashes following the meeting, joint forces of militia and the self-defence of Maidan liquidated the local anti-Maidan.[136]

On **April 15**, the Ukrainian army returned an airport in the Slaviansk region to state control. In Mariupol, the fighting to prevent a storm on the divisions of interior forces resulted in the killing of three separatists and several tens of fighters were taken into captivity.[137]

On **April 14**, acting leader of the State Aleksandr Turchinov announced the launch of an anti-terrorist operation on the territory of Donbass.

On **April 16**, under pressure from local residents who halted a column of Ukrainian armed vehicles in Kramatorsk, the crews of БМД[138] surrendered to pro-Russian fighters.[139].

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133   http://www.unian.net/politics/908179-boeviki-v-slavyanske-razdali-avtomatyi-i-granatometyi-otobrali-orujie-u-militsii-mer.html

134   http://vesti-ukr.com/donbass/47110-mjer-slavjanska-podderzhala-zahvatchikov-rajotdela-i-goradministracii

135   http://ru.tsn.ua/politika/karta-zahvachennogo-donbassa-boevaya-tehnika-pod-trikolorami-i-mnogo-chislennye-blokposty-361176.html

136   http://www.unian.net/politics/907278-narodnaya-samooborona-zaporojya-obyyavila-mobilizatsiyu-iz-za-vozmojnyih-provokatsiy.html; http://ru.tsn.ua/ukrayina/poyavilos-video-kak-tysyachi-zaporozhcev-provodyat -separatistov-koridorom-pozora-v-ubop-360459.html

137   http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2014/04/17/7022736/

138   БМД - armoured vehicles of paratroopers. *Editor's comment*

139   http://vesti-ukr.com/donbass/47860-pod-rossijskie-flagi-v-kramatorske-pereshli-ot-7-do-12-boevyh-mashin

On **April 17**, fighters occupied the TV tower on Karachun Hill close to Slavia; the tower subsequently changed hands several times.

On the night of **April 20**, fighting took place at the checkpoint near the western entry to Slaviansk, during which both sides suffered casualties. The pro-Russian fighters and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the RF accused members of the 'Right sector' of being responsible for the attacks.[140] Later, the bodies of city deputy Vladimir Rybak and a 19-year-old student from Kiev Jurij Popravko, who had earlier been abducted by the fighters, were found in the region of Slaviansk with their bellies ripped open.

A pro-Russian rally was held on the same day in Odessa, which declared the establishment of the 'Odessa People's Republic'.

On **April 24**, the Ukrainian Army engaged in an action and destroyed three checkpoints. The Russian authorities immediately reacted to these developments. President Putin issued a statement saying that the use of military forces by the Ukrainian authorities would have repercussions; Russian army forces started training exercises close to the Ukrainian border. As a result, the Ukrainian leaders were forced to suspend their aggressive actions and turned to blocking the city.

On **April 29**, the Lugansk Regional State Administration building was occupied. About 150 militia officers who were protecting the building defected to the fighters.[141]

The city council of Alchevsk in the Lugansk region was occupied on **April 30**.

On **May 2**, in Odessa supporters of Euromaidan, fans of the football clubs 'Chernomorec' and 'Mettalist', and representatives of the Maidan self-defence planned to hold a joint march 'For the unity of Ukraine'. The moving column of the march met a group of anti-Maidan supporters, armed with shields, baseball bats, firearms and other ammunition. They were wearing distinctive red arm bands as well as 'St. George' ribbons. Later on the red armbands were seen on the sleeves of the military forms of some columns of heavily armed officers of the Ministry of the Interior who were escorting anti-Maidan supporters.[142] At about 4:00 p.m. the first clashes between Euromaidan supporters and anti-Maidan activists broke out at the exit from Grecheskaja Square, which later spread to the neighbouring streets of the town. Militia officers wearing red armbands

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140   http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/newsline/0DE97F7486FE0B1C44257CC0002F4C26
141   http://ru.euronews.com/2014/04/29/ukraine-government-buildings-seized-in-luhansk/
142   http://www.segodnya.ua/regions/odessa/detalnaya-hronologiya-sobytiy-2-maya-v-odesse-videomate-rialy-rasskazy-ochevidcev-609722.html;   http://podrobnosti.ua/974217-militsija-odessy-nosila-2-maja-krasnye-povjazki-storonnikov-rossii-foto.html

actually defended the anti-Maidan activists from their opponents; later the leadership of the local militia were also accused of supporting the extremists.[143] In addition, behind them pro-Russian fighters were able to throw stones and shoot firearms and non-lethal weapons, in the direction of the football fans and other activists.[144] One football fan from among the Euromaidan supporters was fatally wounded in his lung.[145]

At about 6:30 p.m. the supporters of the Euromaidan liquidated separatists' tent camp at the Kulikovo field.[146] While leaving the Kulikovo field a large number of pro-Russian activists hid and blockaded themselves in the Palace of Trade Unions located in the vicinity and which at the time was surrounded by pro-Russian activists. Serious fights and clashes broke out with the use of stones, firearms, and Molotov cocktails. Shortly after, a fire broke out in the building which led to numerous casualties among the pro-Russian activists. Altogether about 50 individuals were killed during the confrontations on May 2. After the events of May 2, which were the peak of the Odessa confrontation, the actions of the pro-Russian forces were limited to mostly small confrontations and subversive episodes.

On **May 7**, the National army liberated the building of the city council in Mariupol, which was nevertheless seized again shortly after by pro-Russian fighters.

On **May 9**, a battle took place between Ukrainian troops and pro-Russian fighters where the latter managed to maintain their positions despite the losses they suffered. The Ukrainian forces then lost three armoured vehicles.[147]

On **May 11**, a referendum on the independence of the LPR and the DPR was held on the territories of the Lugansk and the Donetsk regions which were not controlled by the central authorities. The referendum was illegal, conducted with numerous violations, and was never recognised by the world's community. The leaders of the separatists announced that 96.2 % of the voters in the Lugansk region, and 89.70 % in Donetsk region voted 'for', and voter turnout was 75%.[148]

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143   https://news.pn/ru/criminal/103212?fb_action_ids=1410734025870947&fb_action_types=og.likes&fb_source=aggregation&fb_aggregation_id=288381481237582; https://news.pn/ru/incidents/103162

144   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eBofgPq1EUs; http://news.bigmir.net/ukraine/813952-Pojavilis--novye-foto-i-video-strelkov-v-Odesse-2-maja; http://www.unian.net/politics/913998-v-odesse-proizoshlo-stolknovenie-mejdu-storonnikami-rf-i-edinoy-ukrainyi-est-jertvyi-obno[vlyaetsya.html#ad-image-0; http://podrobnosti.ua/974256-odessit-o-bojne-2-maja-ja-videl-kak-torchit-avtomat-kalashnikova-i-streljaet-v-tolpu-ocheredjami.html;   http://fakty.ua/181146-ochevidcy-odesskogo-poboicsha-eti-negodyai-palili-po-lyudyam-iz-avtomatov-pryamo-iz-za-spin-milicionerov

145   http://glavcom.ua/news/203180.html

146   http://society.lb.ua/accidents/2014/05/02/265108_odesse_marsh_proukrainskih.html

147   http://fakty.ua/181359-vo-vremya-ato-v-mariupole-pogibli-3-cheloveka-ecshe-30-raneno.

148   http://top.rbc.ru/politics/12/05/2014/923136.shtml

On **May 12**, based on the outcome of the 'referendum', the self-proclaimed authorities of the DPR and LPD declared their sovereignty and announced their intention to merge into a confederation state 'Novorossiya', and access the Russian Federation.

On the morning of **May 22**, a group led by a retired reserve Lieutenant Colonel of the GRU I. Bezler, which was controlling Gorlovka, attacked a checkpoint close to Volovacha town as a result of which 18 Ukrainian fighters were killed.[149] Also in the area of Pubezhnoje and Lisichansk of the Lugansk region a battle took place between the National Army of Ukraine and pro-Russian fighters. The battle resulted in injuries and casualties both among the confronting sides, and peaceful civilians. After the column was blocked en route by civilian provocateurs, armed fighters opened fire on the Ukrainian fighters from behind.[150] Also pro-Russian fighters attacked isolated border guard services in the Lugansk region.[151]

On the night of **May 26,** armed supporters of the DPR, among whom were citizens of the RF, attempted to occupy the airport in Donetsk. As a result of the response actions of the armed forces of Ukraine no less than 50 fighters were lost.[152]

On **June 13**, Ukrainian divisions, using armoured vehicles and mortar guns, liberated Mariupol from pro-Russian fighters without any casualties but with several injuries. However, 5 of the pro-Russian fighters were killed and about 40 were detained.[153]

On **June 14**, in Lugansk fighters using man-portable shoulder-fired low-altitude surface-to-air missile system shot down a transport aircraft IL-76 killing 49 Ukrainian soldiers.[154]

On **June 23**, consultations were held in Donetsk regarding the declaration of a cease fire and the beginning of peace negotiations, although in practice fighting was still continuing.

On **June 29,** the fighters were reported to have the surface-to-air missile BUK at their disposal.[155]

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149   http://podrobnosti.ua/977292-podpolkovnik-gru-igor-bezler-vzjal-otvetstvennost-za-boj-pod-volnova-hoj.html
150   http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2014/05/22/7026071/
151   http://vesti-ukr.com/donbass/52928-ukrainskuju-gosudarstvennuju-granicu-atakovali-tri-raza-za-noch
152   http://ca.reuters.com/article/topNews/idCAKBN0E70F620140527. http://www.pravda.ru/news/world/for-merussr/ukraine/31-05-2014/1210348-donetsk-0/
153   http://obozrevatel.com/politics/71634-mariupol-ot-terroristov-zachischayut-batalonyi-azov-i-dnepr-1-ra-nenyi-dvoe-bojtsov-avakov.htm
154   http://aviation-safety.net/database/record.php?id=20140614-0
155   http://www.vesti.ru/doc.html?id=1741703&tid=105474

On the night of **July 1**, President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko announced the end of the armistice. On the same day a squadron from Bezler occupied the building of the regional internal affairs office in Donetsk, which until then was used by Ukrainian militia fighters faithful to their oath.

On **July 3**, active battles were taking place for control of the state border of Ukraine. In the morning pro-Russian fighters attacked the 'Dolzhansij' border crossing station in the Lugansk region. On the same day Ukrainian armed forces took control of 'Izvarino' check point.

On **July 5**, pro-Russian fighters deserted Slaviansk, Kramatorsk, Druzhkovka and Konstantinovka having lost several armoured vehicles. The towns were taken over by Ukrainian interior forces. The remaining troops of the pro-Russian fighters were relocated to Gorlovka and Donetsk.

On **July 11**, during the attack on Ukrainian troops in the region of Zelenopolje of the Lugansk region, pro-Russian fighters used the multiple fire-rocket system Grad for the first time. They killed no less than 19 Ukrainian fighters and injured 93. The hostile fire was launched from the territory of Russia.[156]

On **July 13**, battles continued at the residential settlements of Aleksandrovsk, Metallist, Rososhnoje, Jubilejnoje not far from Lugansk.[157]

On **July 16,** the pro-Russian fighters attacked Stepanovka, Marinovka and Ambrosievka areas of the Donetsk region and surrounded a large group of Ukrainian armed forces.[158] On the same day numerous witnesses recorded firings by the multiple fire-rocket system Grad from Gukovo of Rostov region.[159] The rocket was fired from the area of the Ukrainian border.[160] The shelling, which continued over the following days, was recorded on satellite images presented by the USA on July 22.[161]

On **July 17**, a Malaysian Airlines Boeing 777 was shot close to the town of Topez in Donetsk region. According to the prevailing version, the aircraft was shot by a Buk-M surface-to-air missile system operated by Russian fighters.[162] After the

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156   http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-28261737;   http://www.mil.gov.ua/news/2014/07/11/viko-nuyuchi-zavdannya-z-prikrittya-dilyanki-derzhavnogo-kordonu-v-luganskij-oblasti-zaginuli-vijskovosluzhbovc-zi-zbrojnih-sil-ukraini/; http://podrobnosti.ua/984326-v-boju-pod-zelenopolem-iz-grada-ubity-desjatki-ukrains-kih-voennyh-streljali-so-storony-rossii-video-foto.html
157   http://www.segodnya.ua/regions/donetsk/boi-za-metallist-ato-pochti-v-luganske-529510.html
158   http://vz.ru/news/2014/7/16/695855.html
159   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xENTdTsipys; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kXpCTUjWGkE.
160   http://podrobnosti.ua/985079-rossija-nachala-vojnu-grady-iz-gukovo-streljajut-po-ukraine-foto-video.html; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=StTcWVSiDTY
161   http://atn.ua/politika/rossiya-vvela-regulyarnye-voysky-v-ukraine-nat.http://rufabula.com/news/2014/07/27/satellite-proof
162   http://glavred.info/politika/rossiya-predostavila-boevikam-donbassa-zenitno-raketnye-kompleksy-raz-vedka-ssha-285467.html

accident the airspace over Lugansk and Donetsk was completely shut down for civil aviation flights.[163]

On **July 20**, mass media published information that fighters of the 'Donetsk Republic' had been undergoing military training and preparing for the uprising since 2009.[164]

In the period from **July 21** to **August 2**, the Ukrainian military forces continued their oppressive actions and took a number of locations under their control.

On **August 3 and 4** several acts of terrorism were committed in Kharkov.[165]

Starting from **August 5** Ukrainian armed forces reinforced their positions in the areas of Lugansk and Donetsk with a view to breaking the links between the two cities.

On **August 6,** fighters of the DPR stepped back from Marjina town to the nearby Petrovskij region.[166]

On **August 9**, after long fights the fighters left Saur-Mogila Hill. On the same day, the media releases stated that Donetsk and Gorlovka were on the verge of entrapment. However, later the fighters announced that they had taken 12 residential areas including Dolzhanskij.[167]

On **August 10**, pro-Russian fighters declared they had defeated Ukrainian armed forces in Ilovaisk, destroyed significant numbers of armoured vehicles of the Ukrainian army, and that they had taken control of major part of the state border with the RF.[168]

On **August 12**, the fighters announced that they had a reserve of 200 trophy and repaired armoured vehicles, which they were prepared to use for counter-attack.[169]

On **August 17**, Semen Semenchenko, commander of the volunteer battalion 'Donbass' announced that contrary to the optimistic communications of the Ukrainian mass media, the situation in the area of the ATO had significantly worsened.[170]

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163   http://www.onderzoeksraad.nl/uploads/phase-docs/701/b3923acad0ceprem-rapport-mh-17-en-interactief.pdf
164   http://www.charter97.org/ru/news/2014/7/20/107692/
165   http://vesti-ukr.com/harkov/63837-harkovskij-bronetankovyj-zavod-obstreljali-iz-ognemeta; http://vesti-ukr.com/harkov/63964-harkovskij-oblvoenkomat-rasstreljali-iz-ognemeta
166   http://ria.ru/world/20140806/1019022147.html
167   http://ria.ru/world/20140809/1019415451.html
168   http://ria.ru/world/20140810/1019469525.html
169   http://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/1374179
170   http://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/1384436

On **August 18**, Ukrainian armed forces made a second attempt to storm Ilovaisk, which developed into fierce fights.

On **August 21**, mass media reported that Russian armed forces, Pskov Division, had taken part in the battles in the Donbass area.[171]

On **August 23,** the fighters announced that they had received significant reinforcements and were forming three infantry volunteer regiments, and were beginning actions using fully-fledged large military formations.[172]

On **August 25**, the Ukrainian armed forces captured Russian paratroopers from 331 parachute regiment (Kostroma) of the 98th Guards Airborne Division of the airborne troops of the RF.[173]

On **August 26**, according to the data available, after a counter-attack of the pro-Russian fighters which was supported by large numbers of regular Russian forces,[174] considerable numbers of the Ukrainian army were surrounded in Ilovaika.[175] Ukrainian armed forces lost control over Saur-Mogila. Combined forces of pro-Russian activists and Russian military forces also launched a counter-attack in another area of the front line.

By the end of August, Ukrainian armed forces were no longer able to conduct aggressive actions of any significance.

On **August 28**, President Petro Poroshenko announced that regular Russian armed forces were deployed in the territory of Ukraine.[176]

On **5 September 2014**, in Minsk representatives of Ukraine, Russia and OSCE signed a protocol on the outcomes of the consultations of the Tripartite contact group, which facilitated a temporary alleviation in the intensity of battles and stabilised the line of confrontation.

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171   http://hvylya.net/news/na-donbasse-voyuyut-voennosluzhashhie-pskovskoy-divizii-istochnik-foto.html.

172   http://www.dialog.ua/news/14625_1408864787

173   http://www.bbc.com/russian/international/2014/08/140827_russian_paratroopers;   http://fakty.ua/186947
-popavshie-v-plen-rossijskie-desantniki-priznayut-chto-eto-ne-ih-vojna-foto-video

174   http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/03/ukraine-soldier-youre-better-clueless-because-truth-horrible-moscow-ilovaysk

175   http://vesti.ua/donbass/67239-volontery-rasskazali-o-tragedii-51-brigady-pod-ilovajskom.   http://ria.ru/world/20140827/1021537574.html

176   http://www.radiosvoboda.org/content/article/26554463.html

CRIMEA

Armed people (later identified as the
Russian Special Forces' servicemen)
wearing uniforms without distinctive
insignia surrounded and blocked the
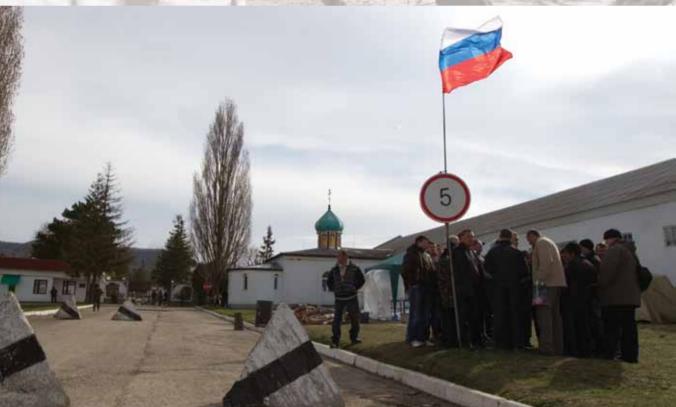Ukrainian Armed Forces' bases in Crimea

Pro-Russian Crimean activists raised
the flag of the Russian Federation
near the territory of the military
unit of the Ukrainian Armed Forces

Pro-Russian activists formed the so-called 'vigilante' (Russian: дружинники) squads that occupied administrative buildings and blocked the units of the Ukrainian Armed Forces in Crimea

The Ribbon of Saint George became the insignia of the pro-Russian separatists in Crimea and Donbass

DONBASS

Multiple rocket launchers BM-21
'Grad' in Luhansk region. Luhansk,
Ukraine, 12 September 2014

Russian multiple rocket launcher
BM-21 'Grad' shelled the identical
equipment of the Ukrainian Armed
Forces. Dmytrivka, Donetsk region,
Ukraine, 13 September 2014

Military transport in a suburb of
Slovyansk. Donetsk region, Ukraine

The transformers of Luhansk thermal power
plant, which supplied a major part of Luhansk
with electricity, were damaged irreparably
by pro-Russian separatists who attacked
it with mortar fire. Shchastya, Luhansk
region, Ukraine, 18 September 2014

The battalion 'Aidar' defends Shchastya and covers Luhansk thermal power plant. Shchastya, Luhansk region, Ukraine, 16 September 2014

A violated forest by shellfire near Slovyansk. Donetsk region, Ukraine

A Ukrainian tank attacked by pro-Russian terrorists on the road from Shchastya to Dmytrivka village. Luhansk region, Ukraine, 13 September 2014

A house destroyed by shellfire. The residents of Debaltseve try to get their lives back on track after pro-Russian separatists' shelling that lasted from midsummer to November. Debaltseve, Donetsk region, Ukraine, 14 November 2014

Unexploded rocket shell stuck in soil

Suspected separatists'
belongings confiscated
by Ukrainian servicemen
not far from Slovyansk.
Donetsk region, Ukraine

A Ukrainian serviceman at the
garage door riddled with bullets
after the clash with pro-Russian
terrorists at the checkpoint near
Slovyansk. Donetsk region, Ukraine

The servicemen of the battalion 'Aidar' defend Shchastya and cover Luhansk thermal power plant in a block post. Shchastya, Luhansk region, Ukraine, 16 September 2014

Camouflaged hull-down tanks alongside the road not far from the Ukrainian-Russian border

Camouflaged infantry fighting vehicle BMP-1

The Ukrainian Armed Forces and united Ukrainian people
succeeded in stopping the onslaught of pro-Russian separatists
supported by the Russian Federation further into Ukraine
and regained the control of some territory of Donbass.

The sign 'Attention! State border of Ukraine. Trespassing prohibited' in front of the infantry entrenchment.

EVGEN DYKYI

THE 'HYBRID' WAR
OF RUSSIA:

EXPERIENCE OF UKRAINE FOR THE BALTIC STATES

EVGEN DYKYI

Evgen Dykyi (born in 1973) is a biologist, Candidate of Biological Sciences, ecology specialist of the Black Sea, lecturer at the National University of 'Kyiv-Mohyla Academy' and Deputy Director of the Ukrainian Scientific Center of Ecology of Sea.

At the age of 15, he joined the Ukrainian national liberation from the Soviet Union movement; in a year, the 16-year-old was arrested for organizing a 'nationalist' protest. In 1990, the 17-year-old first-year student of the National University of Kyiv took part in the Revolution on Granite that was a mass student strike and hunger strike the significance of which was as considerable for Ukraine as the Baltic Way for Lithuania.

In winter 1991, he rallied and commanded a student volunteer platoon that since 17 January 1991 had defended the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania from the Soviet occupants. The platoon took a public oath to the Republic of Lithuania and became the only foreigner platoon in the Lithuanian Volunteer Forces. In 2014, Evgen Dykyi was awarded the Commemorative Medal of 13 January and Commemorative Medal of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania.

In 1995, as a war correspondent and volunteer he participated in the defence of the Chechen Republic from Russian aggression and published several articles directly from the front. After having returned, Evgen Dykyi tried his hand at writing analytical articles summarizing his experience in Chechnya at the request of the Ukrainian military authorities.

The peaceful scientific career was interrupted once again in 2004 when he defended democracy in Ukraine during the Orange Revolution. Evgen Dykyi was a member of the political board of the civic campaign PORA that was one of the main organizers of the Orange Revolution. After the revolution, he returned to scientific and pedagogical work and in 2005 became a permanent expert analyst of the International Democracy Institute – a civic project aimed at supporting post-Soviet countries in getting rid of the Kremlin dictatorship and creating democratic European societies.

In the period of 2013–2014, Evgen Dykyi was an activist of the Revolution of Dignity, also known as the Euromaidan Revolution. He delivered lectures at the Open University of Maidan, constructed barricades, made Molotov cocktails (he learnt the recipe behind the barricades in Vilnius in 1991) and commanded one of the armed self-defence intelligence groups during street fights on critical days in Kyiv. On the last day of the revolution, he led the group during the assault of the hunting residence of the former dictator Viktor Yanukovych in the forest near Kyiv.

When the Russian intervention started in Ukraine, Evgen Dykyi and his students joined the first volunteers at the front and stopped Russian aggression while the regular units of the Ukrainian Armed Forces were formed. Evgen Dykyi was in command of the infantry platoon of the separate volunteer assault battalion 'Aidar' at the Luhansk front and participated personally in liberating 12 villages and towns in Luhansk region.

Having suffered from a serious injury and two major operations, he became disabled and was demobilized. Evgen Dykyi returned to his peaceful profession and contributed to the restoration of the only marine institute that survived the occupation of Crimea. However, he continues his fight using other methods. Evgen Dykyi is a member of the board of the veteran union 'Anti-terrorist Operation' (this is how the Russian–Ukrainian war is still called) and delivers lectures on 'hybrid' war and organization of resistance against aggression for the Baltic countries as well.